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by

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

RĀMĀYAṆA STUDIES SINCE THE 1950s

Introduction

THE stanza of the Bālakāṇḍa, which I quote as I begin this work[1] and which Robert P. Goldman has aptly adopted as the motto for his translation of the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki for the Princeton Library of Asian Translations,[2] asserts that the story of the Rāmāyana will spread or flourish in the world as long as mountains and rivers shall endure upon the earth.

Judging from the enormous literature which has grown out of the Rāmāyaṇa story in India and in the neighbouring countries which constitute the region that is often called the "Greater India", there could be no doubt that the assertion of the poet was no exaggeration. As the publisher's blurb of Goldman's work states, "This great Sanskrit epic of ancient India has profoundly affected the literature, art and cultures of countless millions of people in South and South-east Asia—an influence that is perhaps unparalleled in the history of the world literature."

Since the discovery of the Rāmāyaṇa by the West well over a century and a half ago, through partial and complete translations, abridgements and adaptations in Latin, Italian, French, English and German,[3] the Rāmāvaṇa has

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[1]The selection of this stanza (NW I, 2,40—2,35 in Baroda edition) was inspired by Mahāmahopādhyāya Dr. P.V. Kane whom I consulted on my research in 1951 in his apartment in Girgaum, Bombay. Impressed by my 250-item bibliography of Rāmāyaṇa studies, studied and indexed, and noting the interest of a Sri Lankan student in Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, he recited this verse from memory.

[2]Robert P. Goldman: *The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: An Epic of ancient India, Volume I Bālakāṇḍa,* Princeton, 1984. Six more volumes are being produced by the Rāmāyaṇa Translation Consortium.

[3]Maurice Winternitz lists the earliest translations and adaptations into Western languages as follows:- incomplete edition and partial Latin translation by Friedrich Schlegel, 1829 and 1823; Italian translation by Gaspare Gorresio, Paris, 1847-1858 (5 volumes); French translation by H. Fauche, 1854-1858 (9 volumes) and by A. Roussel, Paris, 1903-1905; English metrical rendering by Ralph J.H. Griffith, Benares and London, 1870-1874 (5 volumes), prose translation by Manmatha Nath Dutt, Calcutta, 1892-1894 (7 volumes), and an abridged version in verse by Romesh Dutt, 1900; German condensed version in verse by F. Rückert, 1868 and prose translation of Bālakāṇḍa by J. Menrad, Munich, 1897. See *A History of Indian Literature*, Delhi 1981, Volume I, pp. 12-13 and 458.

not ceased to attract the attention of Indologists, in particular, and students of literature and religion, in general. New translations and adaptations continue to be produced, thus evincing the lasting popularity of the epic throughout the world.[4]

When one surveys even cursorily the volume of Rāmāyaṇa studies which appear either as learned treatises and monographs or as articles in scholarly journals, one is astounded by the range and depth of interest as well as the quality of intensive research displayed in them by an ever-increasing galaxy of savants. The poet's assertion on the endurance of the epic is thus further supported by this growing body of research studies.

What I propose to do in this Preface which is sub-titled *Rāmāyaṇa studies since the 1950s* is to present a cross-section of the vast literature which has appeared since I wrote my *The Society of the Rāmāyana* in 1952. An exhaustive bibliography, as far as I am aware, is under preparation by CESMEO in Torino (Turin), Italy, under the direction of Oscar Botto, who has also made an extensive study of the contribution of the pioneering Italian Rāmāyaṇa scholar, Gaspare Gorresio and also of the origin and development of Indian epics. It is neither intended nor attempted, due to constraints of time and space, to be exhaustive in my treatment and, as such, review and analysis have been cut down to the barest minimum. My main objective is to underscore how widespread and wide-ranging the studies are and to pinpoint those aspects of the Rāmāyaṇa which are currently receiving the attention of Indologists.

Critical Edition by the Oriental Institute of Baroda

The most outstanding landmark in Rāmāyaṇa studies over the last four decades is the *Critical Edition of the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* in seven volumes by the Oriental Institute of Baroda between 1960 and 1975. The scholars involved in this monumental task (namely the two general Editors G.H. Bhatt and U.P. Shah and P.C. Divanji, G.C. Jhala, D.R. Mankad and P.L. Vaidya) have not only provided the requisite critical apparatus by careful and systematic recording of manuscript evidence but also, in their introductions and appendices, delved into many an unresolved issue on the evolution of the epic poem. Their discussions of the different points of view on (i) the authenticity or originality

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[4]In English alone, during the period under review, several attempts have been made at retelling the story of the Rāmāyaṇa: e.g. Aubrey Menon: *The Rāmāyaṇa,* New York, 1954; William Buck: *Rāmāyaṇa,* Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1976; R.K. Narayan: *The Rāmāyaṇa,* New York, 1972 (based on Kamba Rāmāyaṇa in Tamil).

See also footnote No. 66. The most convincing testimony to the felt need for a complete, accurate and readable translation is the effort made by the Rāmāyaṇa Translation Consortium for the Princeton Library of Asian Translations: i.e. by Robert P. Goldman, Sheldon I. Pollock, Rosalind J. Lefeber, Barend A. van Nooten and Sally J. Sutherland.

of certain passages and (ii) the development of Recensions and their mutual dependence or interaction are indeed learned and informative. The divergence of opinions in a team which has collaborated closely is an eye-opener to the student of the Rāmāyaṇa as regards the tentative nature of the conclusions that one is permitted to draw from meagre, flimsy and shifting evidence.[5]

I had the good fortune of observing in 1951 how the critical edition of the Mahābhārata was progressing at the Bhandarkar Research Institute, Deccan Gymkhana, Poona (now Pune), during my brief period of research there under the supervision of Professor R.N. Dandekar. Sharing the Institute's Guest House with me was M.R. Nambiar of the Oriental Institute of Baroda, whose assignment was to study the methods of textual criticism adopted by the Mahābhārata team so as to model Barodas' work on the Rāmāyaṇa on them. With the kind of insightful observations which Nambiar had shared with me, I did expect the critical edition of the Rāmāyaṇa of Baroda to be of the highest calibre of thoroughness, accuracy and objectivity. In this I have not been disappointed. There are, of course, certain lapses and inadequacies; but these are inevitable in the first edition of such a massive literary venture. Happily, they are relatively few. But the discussion initiated by editorial decisions to reject certain passages as later interpolations could continue for decades and open new avenues of investigation not merely on the evolution of the epic poem *per se* but, more importantly, on all aspects of oral tradition, the growth of religious concepts and the role of literature in Oriental culture.

A major by-product of the Baroda effort is the Journal of the Institute (JOIB—Journal of the Oriental Institute of Baroda) which was published since 1950. It should not be surprising that a substantial number of studies to be discussed in this Preface appeared in this Journal. It has proved to be an effective forum for students of the Rāmāyaṇa as could be seen from the discussions and exchange of views conducted through its pages.

Vālmīki, the ādikavi—Poet, Bard or Minstrel

The identity, the historicity and the motivation of Vālmīki have continued to receive wide attention. Rev. Camille Bulcke whose intensive studies

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[5]Cf. Goldman: loc. cit. p. 85. "In essence the critical edition of the Rāmāyaṇa has collected the fullest record anywhere of the stages of growth and development of a great oral epic tradition." See also his footnotes on pp. 5, 27, 34-36, 74, 84, 86-89 and 91 and the note on p. 273. Editors of the Critical Edition have subscribed, in addition to their introductions and appendices, such research papers as the following:- G.H. Bhatt: *The Fire-Ordeal of Sītā—An Interpolation in the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa,* JOIB, 5, 1955-56; *Rāmāyaṇa Commentaries,* JOIB, 14, 1964; G.C. Jhala: *The Nala Episode and the Rāmāyana, a footnote,* ABORI, 48-49, 1968; D.R. Mankad: *The Matsya-Purāṇa, and the Rāmāyaṇa,* Purāṇa, 8, 1966; U.P. Shah: *Sālankatas and Lankā,* JAOS, 96, 1976. Cf. also reviews of the Critical Edition: e.g. V.S. Agrawala and Krishnadasa Rai: JAOS, 82, 1962; Louis Renou: JA, 251, 1963.

of the Rāmāyaṇa date from 1949, delves deep into these points in two articles in JOIB in 1958-59.[6] Charlotte Vaudeville sees Vālmīki as attempting through certain episodes of the epic to raise the social status of Kuśīlavas (bards or minstrels) of whom he is presumed to be one, to a high level of respectability.[7] Alfred Bloch assumes Vālmīki to be a court poet of the Ikṣvāku Dynasty and adduces evidence to establish his contemporaneity with Rāma.[8]

The Japanese scholar Minoru Hara utilizes the episodes about Nārada and Vālmīki and about Vālmīki and Kuśa and Lava as evidence for his conclusions that Vālmīki was himself a singer of tales and that the system of oral transmission from aged teachers to young pupils as was current in ancient India was similar to what persists in the living Slavic oral tradition approach.[9] A more recently published study by E. Holfstetter advances the theory that Vālmīki was a 'lord of animals'.[10]

On a wider canvas, Goldman examines previously expressed views on Vālmīki and comments particularly on his epithet: *ādikavi*, his historicity and contemporaneity with Rāma, his family affiliations and teachers, his skills as a poet in the portrayal of complex characters and his psychological insight. Goldman also compares Vālmīki with the poets of the Mahābhārata and Homer. While accepting the current view that Vālmīki—the author of the five middle books—was a historical personage, he sees no reason to regard Vālmīki as having any greater claim to historicity than Vyāsa, the compiler of the Mahābhārata. Goldman further argues that the traditions of inspired authorship in respect of both the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa are considerably later than their oldest surviving portions.[11]

In a multi-pronged treatment of the Rāma-story in general, with due emphasis on the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, J.L. Brockington feels that "the evidence of a compact language and style strongly suggests that the traditional ascription of the Rāmāyaṇa to Vālmīki is valid in so far as it affirms that the core of the work was composed by a single author." But he is cautious in emphasizing that "naturally there is no means of showing whether or not this was the Vālmīki of the legend," and explains further, "I shall use the name Vālmīki

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[6]Camille Bulcke (Rev.): *About Vālmīki,* JOIB, 8, 1958 and *More about Vālmīki*, JOIB, 8, 1959.

[7]Charlotte Vaudeville: *Rāmāyaṇa Studies I: The Krauñcavadha Episode in the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa,* JAOS, 83, 1963.

[8]Alfred Bloch: *Valmīki und die Ikṣvakuiden*, Indo-Iranian Journal, 7, 1964.

[9]Minoru Hara: *Vālmīki the singer of Tales,* S.K. De Memorial Volume, edited by R.C. Hazra and S.C. Banerji, Calcutta, 1972.

[10]E. Holfstetter: *Der Herr de Tiere im Alten Indien* (Freiburger Beiträge Zur Indologie 14) Wiesbaden, 1980.

[11]Goldman: loc. cit, specially, pp. 29-31; 49-54; 70-72, 98-105 and 130-132. See also Arya Rāmachandra Tiwari: *Time of the Bālakāṇḍa*, JOIB, 2, 1952-53.

to denote the original author of the Rāmāyaṇa, as contrasted with later reciters or interpolators, but this in itself implies no further assertion about the date and the nature of the work than that the original appears to be traceable to one man, who no doubt used and to some extent incorporated older material in his epic."[12]

The Evolution of the Rāmāyaṇa

The evolution of the Rāmāyaṇa as a national epic has received the attention of a number of recent scholars. Of them, Bulcke continues the line of research he pursued in his monograph in Hindi, *Rām-kathā (Utpatti aur Vikās)*, Allahabad, 1950, and contributes two important articles to JOIB on the genesis of the Bālakāṇḍa and the genesis of the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa Recensions.[13]

His discussion of the Recensions which elaborates further his study of 1949, paves the way for detailed investigation of the relative authenticity of the three main Recensions by the editors of the Critical Edition as well as both Goldman and Brockington. As Goldman rightly points out, "The editors of the critical edition are not unanimous in their understanding of these problems and, in fact, the whole notion of 'recensions' with regard to the Indian epics is somewhat indeterminate."[14]

What the present state of understanding seems to reveal is the following: While Rāmāyaṇa scholarship has, over the last four decades, brought in more insights and the analysis of archaisms, formulaic phrases and stylistic and content variations has confirmed the evolution of the epic in a number of recensions identifiable in geographical terms, Weber's slogan with which I begin my brief note on the textual problem—"*soviel handschriften, soviel Rāmāyaṇas*" (p. 25)—continues to be valid. A point which the recent scholars have emphasized—namely, that the northern manuscripts appear to have been worked upon by copyists who polished the language, consciously archaized and even vulgarized certain passages—underscores the reason for the textual diversity specially in the northern recensions.[15] An ineluctable conclusion is that the tex-

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[12]J.L. Brockington: *Righteous Rāma: The Evolution of an Epic,* Delhi, 1985, p. 10.
[13]JOIB, 2, 1952-53 and JOIB, 5, 1955.
[14]Goldman: loc. cit. p. 84.
[15]Cf. Bhat's introductions to Volumes I and III, Mankad's introduction to Volume IV and Vaidya's introduction to Volume VI of the Critical Edition. Pertinent remarks are made by T. Burrow and Louis Renou in their reviews: JRAS, 1959, pp. 77-79 and JA, 251, 1963, pp. 283-284. For a more recent analysis see Sheldon I. Pollock: *Text Critical Observations on Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa,* Sternbach Festschrift, Vol. I, Lucknow, 1979. The annotations of Goldman and Sally J. Sutherland to the Bālakāṇḍa (Goldman: loc. cit. pp. 273-396) reflect meticulous care in differentiating the relative validity of variant readings in different recensions and manuscripts from the standpoints of contextual relevance and aesthetic norms.

tual problem would require more intensive research before the prevailing disagreements and contradictions are resolved.

Re-evaluation of Earlier Conclusions

In the study ot the evolution of the Rāmāyaṇa, a consistent effort has been made in recent years to re-evaluate the conclusions of earlier scholars and to draw new inferences.

The relationship between *Rāmopākhyāna* in the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa is one of the important issues dealt with at length by P.L. Vaidya in his introduction to Volume VI of the Critical Edition in 1971 and subsequently by V . Raghavan and J.A.B. van Buitenen.[16] The opinions of Vaidya and van Buitenan which discount the priority of the Rāmāyaṇa are subjected to an in-depth analysis by Goldman who concludes, "With the elimination of the Rāmopākhyāna as probable source or even a collateral descendant from a common source of the story, we can with some assurance assert that the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa or at least the text that can be reconstructed from the manuscripts of its three recensions, is the earliest surviving version of the Rāma legend."[17] J.L. Brockington, who notes approximately 15 per cent of identical wording in the Rāmopākhyāna and the Rāmāyaṇa, is even more emphatic in saying that the Rāmopākhyāna is, in general, closer to the northern recension of the Rāmāyaṇa and that this particular recension was well established before the fixing of the text of the Mahābhārata. He further shows that the primary affiliation of Rāmopākhyāna is with the north-eastern recension.[18]

Historicity of the Events and Characters

The closely related problem of the date of the Rāmāyaṇa and the historicity of Rāma and the events described in the epic finds reference in many of the studies in recent years.

A broad consensus has been reached by scholars as regards the upper and lower limits assignable to the development of the epic, even though some

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[16]V. Raghavan: *The Greater Rāmāyaṇa,* Vārānasi, 1973; J.A.B. van Buitenan: *The Mahābhārata,* Vol. II, Chicago, 1975.

[17]Goldman: loc. cit. p. 39.

[18]Brockington: *Sanskrit Epic Tradition I: Epic and Epitome* (Rāmāyana and Rāmopākhyāna), IT (Indologica Taurinensia—Torino), 6, 1978. See also *Righteous Rāma,* pp. 226-27. For detailed comparisons of the Rāmāyana and Rāmopākhyāna, see pp. 57, 92, 98, 198, 226-236, 310-314. For a similar but less detailed treatment of the priority of Rāmāyaṇa vis-a-vis certain episodes of the Māhabhārata, see P.V. Kane, *The Two Epics*, ABORI, 47, 1966 and Jhala: *The Nala Episode and the Rāmāyaṇa* (vide Footnote 5) and the reactions it evoked in Shah: introduction to Volume VII of the Critical Edition, pp. 29 ff; and L.A. van Daalen: *Vālmīki's Sanskrit*, Leiden, 1980, pp. 42 ff.

precision and refinement is sought with regard to specific stages of its evolution. But with regard to the historicity of its events and characters, a vigorous search continues.

The unprecedented popularity, which the Rāmāyaṇa gained in India on account of the current television serial, skillfully designed and produced by Ramanand Sagar, has revived a widespread public interest in this issue. Scholars have been drawn into open discussion in mass media; for example, Romila Thapar and H.D. Sankalia expressing opposing views. Romila Thapar says that the original conflict which formed the subject-matter of an early poem was possibly between young members of the ruling house of Kosala with their neighbours to the south of the Ganges valley and some "perfectly feasible stories" and "stereotyped folklore" elements merged to form the epic but "all this does not take us back to a point where we could say that a particular event is historically proven." On the contrary, Sankalia asserts that the events of the Rāmāyaṇa took place in the fourth century B.C. or even earlier and that Rākṣasas were tribals whose kingdom Lankā was near Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh.

Archaeology is invoked as establishing the antiquity of the Rāmāyaṇa. B.B. Lal and K.N. Dixit had been involved in a national project called the *Archaeology of the Rāmāyaṇa Sites,* while Sankalia had done some excavations at the spot where he located Rāvaṇa's Lankā—though not to his satisfaction as the local people had prevented him from excavating the lowest layer. As regards these excavations, Romila Thapar had made the significant observation, "Archaeology cannot prove the historicity of the events and this is where the correlation goes wrong."[19]

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[19]See the popular Indian weekly magazine *Sunday;* 27 March-2 April 1988: *Sunday Special,* pp. 59-65. Both Romila Thapar and Sankalia, who are interviewed by the periodical, have made important contributions to research by their monographs and articles. See Romila Thapar: *Exile and the Kingdom: Some Thoughts on the Rāmāyaṇa,* Bangalore, 1978; *The Historian and the Epic*, ABORI, 60, 1979. *H.D. Sankalia: Rāmāyaṇa: Myth or Reality,* New Delhi, 1963; *Ur (Original) Rāmāyaṇa or Archaeology and the Rāmāyaṇa,* Indologen-Tagung, edited by H.Häartel and V. Moeller, 1971; *Ayodhyā of the Rāmāyaṇa in a Historical Perspective,* ABORI, 58-59, 1977-1978. For a clear understanding of the complexity of the problem concerning the historicity of Rāma, see A.L. Basham: *The Wonder that was India,* London, 1956, p. 303, where he says "Rāma may have been a chief who lived in the 8th or 7th century B.C.", and pp. 39-40, in which he states, "[Kingdom of Kosala] which grew in importance with time, was the realm of Rāma, the hero of the second of the great Indian epics, the Rāmāyaṇa. For all his later fame, the literature of the period ignores Rāma and his father Daśaratha completely, so we must conclude that they were both comparatively insignificant chieftains whose exploits were by chance remembered to be elaborated and magnified by later generations of bards until, around the beginning of the Christian era, they received their final form. It is not even certain that Rāma was a king of Kosala at all, for the earliest version of the legend that we possess makes him a king of Banāras."

As inconclusive as archaeological evidence are those derived from other sciences and pseudo-sciences. For example, K. Ferrari d'Occhieppo seeks to date Rāma's birth on the basis of the horoscope given in the Bālakāṇḍa.[20] On the assumption that the astronomical phenomenon reflected in the horoscope could be dated 4 April 110 BC or 11 March 200 AD or 16 March 745 AD, Brockington dates not the birth of Rāma but the passage; he says, "Thus, even acceptance of the most likely of these would imply a third century date for the passage."[21]

Heino Gehrts turns to social anthropology to see the basis for the Rāmāyaṇa story in the Oriental form of the folklore motif of two brothers and one bride and seeks further elements of ritual brotherhood between Rāma and his brothers. He shows how the historicity and particularity of the hero are transmitted in the popular memory into a mythical and universal form.[22] More or less on similar lines are the views of Georges Dumezil who sees Rāma as the Kṣatriya element in a tripartite structure of Rāma legends wherein Paraśu-Rāma reflected the Brahman and Bala-Rāma the commoner.[23]

Psychological Basis for the Portrayal of Characters

Goldman and J. Moussaieff Masson jointly and severally subject some of the incidents and characters of the Rāmāyaṇa to psychological analysis and, in one case expressly, to psycho-analytical observation.

Their publications in chronological order offer an insight into how students of the Rāmāyaṇa proceed systematically to leave no stone unturned in their effort to unravel the mysteries of the origin and the evolution of this epic. In 1969, Masson discussed how the literary critic Abhinavagupta handled the epics as *itihāsa* in his paper: *Who killed Cock Krauñca? Abhinavagupta's Reflections on the Origin of Aesthetic Experience.*[24] In the same year, he collaborated with Goldman to write *Who Knows Rāvana: a Narrative Difficulty in the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa,*[25] and examined afresh the conclusions of Jacobi on the historicity of the Ayodhyākāṇḍa and the origin of the episodes of the abduction of Sītā as an agricultural myth reflecting a reworking of ancient material

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[20]K. Ferrai d'Occhieppo: *Datierbarkeit des Horoscopes im I. Buch des Epos Rāmāyaṇa,* WZKSA-Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde süd-asiens, 23, 1979.

[21]Brockington: *Righteous Rāma,* p. 218.

[22]Heino Gehrts: *Rāmāyaṇa : Brüder und Braut im märohen-Epos,* Bonn, 1977. For comments on the idea of ritual brotherhood, which requires Gehrts to consider two of the four brothers as later additions, see Brockington: Ibid, p. 12.

[23]For this theory, see Brockington: Ibid. pp. 11-12, who refers to Georges Dumézil: *Mythe et Epopée I,* Paris 1968, and M. Mole: *Deux notes sur le Rāmāyaṇa,* Homages à Georges Dumézil, Brussels, 1960.

[24]JOIB, 18, 1969.

[25]ABORI, 50, 1969.

from the Vedas. They, in conclusion, agree with Weber and Winternitz that the Vedic notion of Sītā as the goddess of the ploughshare is separated from a portrait in the Rāma-legend by a wide gulf. Masson's *Fratricide among the Monkeys: Psychoanalytical Observations on an Episode in the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*[26] in 1975 is followed by Goldman's *Vālmīki and the Bhṛgu Connection*[27] and *Fathers, Sons and Gurus: Oedipal Conflict in Sanskrit Epics*[28] in 1976 and 1978 respectively. Further Goldman examines the portrayal of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa in *Rāmaḥ Sahalakṣmaṇaḥ: Psychological and Literary Aspects of the Composite Hero of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*[29] while Masson treats Hanuman similarly in his *Hanuman as Imaginary Companion*.[30] The latter has continued his psychological analyses of the Rāmāyaṇa episodes and characters in a more extensive work: *The Oceanic Feeling: The Origins of Religious Sentiment in Ancient India*.[31] The quintessence of this fifteen-year study is to be found in the section of the Introduction which Goldman has written to his translation of the Bālakāṇḍa under the title: *Rāma: The Hero as Renouncer*.[32]

The issues which these discussions deal with cover a vast range of topics: e.g. Rāma's exaggerated self-denial and lack of emotion;[33] the "virtual battle of mutual difference" between Rāma and his brother Bharata; the creation by poets of closely associated but clearly differentiated composite character sets to lend the story a certain amount of tension; Vālmīki's sensitivity and psychological insight in allowing Rāma a measured degree of human frailty; the inferior place Sītā is made to occupy in Rāma's heart in contrast to his concern for his male relatives and subjects; the psychological implications of getting Rāma to kill a woman (in this case the demoness Tāṭakā) and the trials involving the mastery and neutralization of powerful bows in the keeping of patriarchal figures. What this psychological approach to the explanation of episodes and characters of the Rāmāyaṇa reveals is that, in the eyes of these

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[26]JAOS, 95, 1975.
[27]JAOS, 96, 1976.
[28]JIP (Journal of Indian Philosophy), 6, 1978.
[29]JIP, 8, 1980.
[30]JAOS, 101, 1981.
[31]J. Moussaieff Masson: *The Oceanic Feeling: The Origins of Religious Sentiment in Ancient India*, Dordrecht, 1980.
[32]Goldman: *The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: An Epic of Ancient India, Volume I, Bālakāṇḍa*, pp. 49-59.
[33]In this Goldman is guided—though with some reservations—by Dhirendra Narain's assessment in *Hindu Character: A few glimpses*, Bombay, 1957.

scholars, the epic is anything but a haphazardly assembled mass of legends and myths.[34]

Linguistic and Stylistic Analysis: Stages of Growth

As regards the diverse points of view from which the contents of the Rāmāyaṇa have been analysed, Brockington makes an important assertion. He says "Our understanding of the precise mechanisms involved and our interpretation of the information which the epic can provide on many aspects of the culture is obviously dependent on an accurate and reliable discrimination of the successive stages of growth and adaptation which the work has undergone."[35] He attempts to do it by means of a thorough study of language and style.

From 1949 to 1972, Nilmadhav Sen has been one of the most prolific analysts of the language of the Rāmāyaṇa. His studies fall into four main categories: (i) a detailed examination of the verbal forms in the epic;[36] (ii) vocabulary of the Rāmāyaṇa with special reference to long compounds;[37] (iii) an extensive survey of the un-Pāṇinian forms—namely, variations from norms laid down by Pāṇini;[38] and (iv) syntax of verbs and nouns and phonetical characterstics.[39] In all these and in the comparative study of some linguistic

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[34]Certain characters and episodes of the Rāmāyaṇa have been analysed by some scholars from different points of view: e.g. Asoke Chatterjee: *The Problem of Śāntā's Parentage as affecting the Text of the Rāmāyaṇa,* Our Heritage, 2, no. 2, 1954 and *Śāntā's Parentage*, IHQ, 33, 1957; Camille Bulcke: *La Naissance de Sīta,* BEFEO-Bulletin de e'Ecole Francaise d'Extrême Orient, 46, 1952; *The Characterization of Hanuman,* JOIB, 9, 1959-60; *Sītā's Friend Trijaṭā,* IA, 3rd series I, 1964; D.C. Sircar: *The Rāmāyaṇa and the Daśaratha Jataka,* JOIB, 26, 1976-77, S.N. Batra: *Daśagrīva or Daśānana of the Rāmāyaṇa (The Ten-headed Rāvaṇa)*, JOIB, 23, 1973-74; A. Wurm: *Character-Portrayals in the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: a Systematic Representation*, Delhi, 1976; and T. Goudriaan: *Khaḍga-Rāvana and his Worship in Balinese and Indian Tantric Sources*, WZKSA, 21, 1977.

[35]Brockington: Ibid. p. 15.

[36]Nilmadhav Sen on verbal forms:- *The Secondary Conjugations in the Rāmāyaṇa,* PO, 14, 1949; *The Future-System of the Rāmāyaṇa,* IL-Indian Linguistics, 12, 1951; *The Aorist System of the Rāmāyaṇa,* Vāk, 1, 1951; *Some Epic Verbal Forms in the Rāmāyaṇa,* JOIB, 3, 1953-54.

[37]Nilmadhav Sen on Vocabulary:- *The Vocabulary of the Rāmāyaṇa,* Vāk, 1, 1951; *The Vocabulary of the Rāmāyaṇa,* Vāk, 2, 1952; *The Vocabulary of the Rāmāyaṇa (Long Compounds),* Vāk, 5, 1957.

[38]Nilmadhav Sen on Un-Paṇinian Forms: *Un-Pāṇinian Sandhi in the Rāmāyaṇa,* JASB(L), 16, 1950; *Un-Pāṇnian Perfect Forms in the Rāmāyaṇa,* Vāk, 1, 1951; *Un-Paṇiṇian Infinitive Forms in the Rāmāyaṇa,* IL, 12, 1951; *Un-Pāṇinian Nominal Declensions in the Rāmāyaṇa,* JOIB, 5, 1955; *Un-Pāṇinian Pronouns and Numerals in the Rāmāyaṇa,* JOIB, 5, 1956; *Irregular Treatment on the Augment in the Rāmāyaṇa,* S.K. De Memorial Volume, 1972.

[39]Nilmadhav Sen on Syntax and Phonetics: *Syntax of Tenses in the Rāmāyaṇa,* JOIB, 1, 1952; *On the Syntax of the Cases in the Rāmāyaṇa,* JOIB, 2, 1952-53; *Some Phonetical Characteristics of the Rāmāyaṇa,* JASB(L), 17, 1951.

aspects of different recensions,[40] Sen's copiously documented description of the distinguishing features of the Sanskrit of the Rāmāyaṇa establishes two lines of further research which contemporary and later scholars have been quick to recognize as invaluable: (a) the epic reflects a specific stage in the evolution of the Sanskrit language and the epic language records marked departures from the standard Sanskrit of Pāṇini; (b) the language and style reveal adequately clear levels of development to be utilized as yardsticks in determining whether a given passage in the epic is an interpolation or not.[41]

On similar lines, linguistic archaisms are examined by Satya Vrat in 1964 in a monograph entitled *The Rāmāyaṇa: a Linguistic Study* (Delhi). In 1966 Nabneeta Sen undertook a formulaic analysis in an article in JAOS.[42] It is significant, by way of a link with Indian research, in that Brockington, who chronologically is the next to enter this scene, lists as his first contribution a note on Mrs. Sen's article in 1969-70.[43]

Over the ensuing dozen years, Brockington re-examines the conclusions of his predecessors as regards grammatical and stylistic characteristics of the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa in no less than six substantial papers devoted to verbal and nominal systems, stereotyped expressions and clichés (or proverbs), syntax and the evolution of formulaic expressions.[44] His principal goal is to identify in clear-cut layers the various stages of the development of the Rāmāyaṇa. Whereas my own attempt in a similar direction in 1952 was purely from a literary standpoint (see the five stages of development in Chapter I § 73 p. 36 and dates for each stratum in § 90 p. 41), Brockington uses as his criterion a detailed line by line linguistic analysis. Similar treatment of the Mahābhārata by two Russian scholars, namely, V. Vasilkov and

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[40]Nilmadhav Sen: *A Comparative Study in some Linguistic Aspects of the Different Recensions of the Rāmāyaṇa*, JOIB, 1, 1952.

[41]Cf. Nilmadhav Sen: *The Fire-Ordeal of Sītā—a Later Interpolation in the Rāmāyaṇa?* JOIB, 1, 1952 and G.H. Bhatt: *The Fire-Ordeal of Sītā—an Interpolation in the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*, JOIB, 5, 1955-56.

[42]Nabaneeta Sen: *Comparative Studies in Oral Epic Poetry and the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa: A Report on the Bālakāṇḍa*, JAOS, 86, 1966.

[43]J.L. Brockington: *A Note on Mrs. Sen's article about the Rāmāyaṇa*, JAOS, 89, 1969-70.

[44]*Linguistic and stylistic analyses of the Rāmāyaṇa by* J.L. Brockington:- *The Verbal System of the Rāmāyaṇa*, JOIB, 19, 1969-70; *The Nominal System of the Rāmāyaṇa*, JOIB, 19, 1970; *Stereotyped Expressions in the Rāmāyaṇa*, JAOS, 90, 1970; *Vālmīki's Proverbs*, IT, 7, 1979; *Sanskrit Epic Tradition III, Fashions in Formula*, (a Paper presented to the Fifth World Sanskrit Conference, Vārānasi, 1981); *Syntax of the Rāmāyaṇa*, JOIB, 31, 1982.

P.A. Grinster[45] and the comprehensive linguistic analyses of the Rāmāyaṇa by L.A. van Daalen[46] seem to have produced adequate hypotheses relating to formulaic expressions, archaisms and archaizations, textual corruption and revision by copyists etc. for Brockington to achieve his objective in his recent book, *Righteous Rāma: The Evolution of an Epic*, Delhi, 1985.

L.A. van Daalen's hypothesis is that Vālmīki wrote perfectly correct Sanskrit which conformed to the norms of Pāṇini and that irregular features were errors committed by copyists. He is thus in disagreement with the view that what was strictly Pāṇnian could, in most cases, be revisions made by way of polishing an original text by grammatically well-trained copyists. This theory is strongly criticized by Brockington, who also rejects van Daalen's conclusion, on the basis of unusual features of morphology and syntáx, that certain passages are either interpolations or "reworked". In some cases, Brockington considers van Daalen's criteria to establish the lateness of a passage as excessive.[47]

Controversial as the methodology of morphological and syntactical peculiarities as criteria of lateness whether as interpolations or as "reworkings" be, it does not prevent Brockington from identifying and dating five *stages of growth*[48] from the Rāmāyaṇa as follows:

Stages of growth

Stage 1 (orally transmitted from about the fifth to the fourth century BC). All *śloka* stanzas of book 2-6 not listed below (37.10% of the text).

Stage 2 (approximately third century BC to first century AD).

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[45]Brockington has cited and discussed in several references the relevant observations and conclusions of Vasilkov and Grinster in the following works. Vasilkov: *Elementi Ustno-poetichesokoy Techniniv Mahabharatye,* Literary Indü, Moskva, 1973; and *Mahabharata i Ustnaya Epicheskaya Poezia,* Narodi azii i afriki, 1971; and Grinster: *Drevneindijskij Epos, Genezis i Tipologija*, Moskva, 1974. Cf. I. W. de Jong: *Recent Russian Publications on the Indian Epic,* Adyar Library Bulletin, 39, 1975.

[46]L.A. van Daalen: *Vālmīki's Sanskrit,* Leiden, 1980. See also his *A note on Vidhūma or sadhūma iva pāvakaḥ* at Rāmāyaṇa 1, 55, 19, IT, 7, 1979 (Brockington suggests adding to this analysis the expression Vidhūmo'gnir ivotthitaḥ in 3, 64, 4b. *Righteous Rāma,* p. 44.)

[47]Brockington: Ibid. Specially Chapter 2 (pp. 16-61) and appendix (pp. 329-346). Cf. footnotes on pp. 16, 18, 21, 45, 113, 331-345.

[48]Ibid, p. 329.

The following complete sargas of books 2-6 (*śloka* material, 34.05% of the text):

2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1-30	1-4	13	1-8	4-5
46-7	8-11	17-18	12-17	23-4
57-8	13	21	26-7[1.v]	30-1
61	15	23-4	33-7	46-8
65-9	25,28-30	27-30	43	53
74	33	39-42	45-7	55
85	40	49	54-8	57-63
88-9	44-5	59-61		70-3
94-5	50	65-6		79-82
98	53			87
100-2	58			90-1
106-8	60			102-7
110-111	71			111-16

All verses in longer metres in books 2-6 (4.27% of the text).

Stage 3 (composed between the first and third centuries AD).

The Bālakāṇḍa (book 1) and the Uttarakāṇḍa (book 7); comprising 24.57% of the text.

Stage 4 (composed between about the fourth and twelfth centuries AD).

Passages (i.e. those passages relegated by the editors of the Critical Edition to footnotes or to Appendix I) with good manuscript support.

Stage 5 (from about the twelfth century AD).

Passages with poor manuscript support.

This detailed examination of Stage 2 which is said to involve 34.05% + 4.27% (i.e. 38.32%) of the text in the Critical Edition is indeed very informative.

Socio-Economic Data of the Rāmāyaṇa

For Brockington, this exercise is an essential prelude to the socio-economic and religious analysis of the contents of the epic, which he undertakes in Chapters 3 to 7. By dating each sarga and sometimes even specific stanzas, he endeavours to assign the information he gleans from them to particular historical periods.

In so doing, he makes an assertion which calls for scrutiny. He says, "While many attempts have already been made to do this [i.e. to develop 'an

accurate and reliable discrimination of the successive stages of growth and adaptation which the work has undergone'], the problem has been that a particular view of the evolution has been adopted and the evidence viewed in the light of it. In order to avoid the pitfalls involved in this type of approach, our analysis will start from an examination of the text itself, from a study of its language and style...."[49] What is not clear is how and why he considers the linguistic and stylistic approach to be something which would not fall within his description of a "a particular point of view" and how he is sure that it would not be another "pitfall"

Whether on the basis of stages of growth (as Brockington and I have done though on different criteria) or not, the data in the Rāmāyaṇa have been gathered and analysed by several scholars to gain a deeper understanding of the socio-economic, political and cultural conditions of ancient India.

Among them are the substantial monographs specifically on the Rāmāyaṇa data by S.N. Vyas and Ramashraya Sharma.[50] Quite a number of books of a general nature has also given wide coverage to the information in the Rāmāyaṇa.[51] There have also been several research articles on both specific and general themes.[52]

Religious Patterns and Motivation

The religious patterns which have been even more thoroughly researched during recent years stem from two sources. *First*, there are those which emerge from the data in the Rāmāyaṇa. *Second*, there are those suggested by the evolution of its hero, Rāma, in both the epic and its diverse adaptations, progressively into an incarnation of divinity or, more precisely, a re-incarnation of Viṣṇu. J. Gonda examines them as early as 1954 in his *Aspects of Early Viṣṇuism*, which is reprinted in 1969 as *Early Viṣṇuism*.[53] Brockington refers to another monograph of Gonda on change and continuity in Indian religion.[54]

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[49]Ibid, p. 15.

[50]S.N. Vyas, *India in the Rāmāyaṇa Age*, Delhi, 1967; and Ramashraya Sharma: *A Socio-Political Study of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa,* Delhi, 1971.

[51]For example: Dhirendra Narain: *Hindu Character—A Few Glimpses,* Bombay, 1957; D.P. Vora: *Evolution of Morals in Indian Epics,* Bombay, 1959; Dev Raj Chanana: *Slavery in Ancient India,* New Delhi, 1960; Om Prakash; *Food and Drinks in Ancient India, from the Earliest Times to c. 1200 A.D.,* Delhi, 1961; G. Morris Carstairs: *Hindus,* Bloomington, 1961; M.S. Pandey: *Historical Geography and Topography of Bihar,* Delhi, 1963; D.C. Sircar: *Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India,* Delhi, 1971; P.C. Roy: *Political Ideas and Institutions in the Mahābhārata*, Calcutta, 1975.

[52]For example, R.S. Chakravarthy: *Some Aspects of the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki*, ABORI, 53, 1972; Minoru Hara: *The Rakṣasa Form of Marriage,* JAOS, 94, 1974.

[53]G. Gonda: *Aspects of Early Viṣṇuism,* Utrecht, 1954; *Early Viṣṇuism,*, Delhi, 1969.

[54]G. Gonda: *Change and Continuity in Indian Religion, Disputationes Rheno-Trajectinae,* 9, 's-Gravenhage, 1965.

More specifically of the Rāmāyaṇa data are the works of Benjamin Khan, Satya Vrat and Brockington who survey the Sanskrit text for traces of different religious concepts.[55] It is particularly gratifying that Benjamin Khan's findings support my conclusions in Chapter 8.

Indicative of the growing interest in assessing the religious motivation for the origin and the evolution of the Rāmāyaṇa and its many adaptations are works such as those of R. Antoine,[56] who accepts as a basic premise that the epic was never without its religious outlook and even strains logic in interpreting the characters of the epic as re-incarnations of the Hindu Triad (i.e. Rāma = Viṣṇu; Rāvaṇa/Vibhīṣaṇa = Brahma: Indrajit = Śiva) and of T. Whaling,[57] who traces the gradual rise of Rāma to the divinity in which he is revered today. The most comprehensive treatment of this subject hitherto is the painstakingly produced treatise of Brockington whose methdology was earlier discussed at some length. The last four chapters of his book on the religious pattern, adaptations in Sanskrit, adpatations in other languages and the evolution of the epic, which culminate in a succinct and insightful comment on the elevation of the character of Rāma, are the most informative on these themes.

Adaptations in India

An increasingly popular field of study has been the development of the Rāma-story within and outside India. Of the adaptations of the Rāmāyaṇa in Sanskrit, which seem to have served a philosophical or theological purpose, the *Adhyātma-Rāmāyaṇa,* the *Bhūśuṇḍhi-Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Yogavāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* (this in a very restricted manner) are dealt with by H. von Glasenapp, V. Raghavan, B.P. Singh and V.S. Agrawala.[58]

V. Raghavan, the most versatile of the Indian Sanskritists of recent times, whose guidance was invaluable to me in my studies in Madras, examines several other specific and general themes in his inimitable thoroughness. In 1956, he makes a comparative analysis of the Buddhist literature and the epic and delves into such questions as the influence of the Rāmāyaṇa on the early Buddhist poet Aśvaghoṣa.[59] A few years later he works on little known dramatic

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[55]Benjamin Khan: *The Concept of Dharma in Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa,* Delhi, 1965; Satya Vrat: *The Concept of Fate in the Rāmāyaṇa,* PO, 23, nos. 1-2, 1958; Brockington: *Religious attitudes in Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa,* JRAS, 1976.
[56]R. Antoine: *Rāma and the Bards: Epic Memory in the Rāmāyaṇa,* Calcutta, 1975.
[57]T. Whaling: *The Rise of the Religious Significance of Rāma,* Delhi, 1980.
[58]H. von Glasenapp: *Zwei Philosophische Rāmāyaṇa,* Wiesbaden, 1951; V. Raghavan, *Tattvasaṃgraha-rāmāyaṇa of Rāmabrahmānanda,* AORM, 10, 1952-53; *The Greater Rāmāyaṇa,* Vārāṇasi, 1973; B.H. Kapadia: *The Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa,* JOIB, 14, 1964-65; B.P. Singh; *Bhūśuṇḍi Rāmāyaṇa,* Vārānasi, 1964; V.S. Agrawala: *An Architectural Passage in the Yoga Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa,* JOIB, 12, 1962.
[59]V. Raghavan, *The Buddhalogical Texts and the Epics,* Adyar Library Bulletin, 20, 1956.

renderings of the Rāmāyaṇa story.[60] Reference was already made to his monograph on the treatment of the Rāma-story in the Mahābhārata and Purāṇas.[61] In 1975 he embarks on a general survey of extra-Indian versions of the Rāmāyaṇa and follows it five years later with an anthology of studies by eminent scholars on the Rāmāyaṇa tradition in Asia.[62]

The search for traces of the Rāma-story in Buddhist and Jain works has persisted, even though a marked paucity of studies are to be noted in respect of Buddhist literature. Apart from the article of Raghavan to which reference was made in the previous paragraph, D. Schlingloff's reference to a Rāma-story in a Sarvāstivādin Buddhist text and D.C. Sircar's study of the Rāmāyaṇa's priority over the Dasaratha Jātaka merit mention.[63]

The Jain literature, on the other hand, has received ample treatment especially in the Journal of the Oriental Institute of Baroda, which has published no less than four articles. To this must be added J.C. Jain's article on an old version of the Jain Rāmāyaṇa in 1975, which is followed by an edition of *Vasudevahiṇḍi*. This Jain version of the Rāma-story has been in 1950 the subject of three notes by J.W. de Jong.[64]

Some also assess the influence of the epic on later Sanskrit literature. Bhabatosh Bhattacharya analyses the influence of the Rāmāyaṇa on Ballāla Sena and Raghunandana, the authors of *Dānasāgara* and *Smṛtitatva* respectively, while H.D. Sankalia does likewise in respect of *Kundamālā* of Dhīranāga and *Uttararāmacarita* of Bhavabhūti.[65] Similar studies are also undertaken by translators as well as comparative students of the Rāma-story in other Indian languages—specially Hindi and Tamil.[66] Again, in respect of this aspect of

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[60]V. Raghavan: *Some Old Lost Rāma Plays,* Annamalainagar, 1961.

[61]See footnote 58.

[62]V. Raghavan: The *Rāmāyaṇa in Greater India*, Surat, 1975; and *The Rāmāyaṇa Tradition in Asia* (edited by V. Raghavan), New Delhi, 1980.

[63]D. Schlingloff: *The Oldest Extant Parvan-List of the Mahābhārata*, JAOS, 89, 1969; D.C. Sircar: *The Rāmāyaṇa and the Daśaratha Jātaka*, JOIB, 26, 1976.

[64]Hirlal R. Kapadia: *The Rāmāyaṇa and the Jain Writers,* JOIB, 1, 1952; V.M. Kulkarṇi: *The Origin and Development of the Rāma-Story in Jain Literature,* JOIB, 9, 1959; K.R. Chandra: *Sources of the Rāma-Story of Paumacariyam*, JOIB, 14, 1964; J.C. Jain: *An Old Version of the Jaina Rāmāyaṇa,* Sambodhi, 4, 1975; *Vasudevahiṇḍi,* Ahmedabad, 1977; J.W. de Jong: *Three Notes on Vasudevahiṇḍi*, Saṃjñāvyākaraṇa, Studia Indologica Internationala, Poona/Paris, 1954.

[65]Bhabatosh Bhattacharya, *The Rāmāyaṇa and its Influence upon Ballāla Sena and Raghunandana,* JOIB, 2, 1953. (cf. also Nilmadhav Sen: *A Note on 'The Rāmāyaṇa and its Influence upon Ballāla Sena and Raghunandana'*, JOIB, 2, 1953); H.D. Sankalia: *Kundamāla and Uttararāmacarita*, JOIB, 15, 1965-66.

[66]For example: W.J.P. Hill's translation of Rāmcaritamānas: *The Holy Lake of the Acts of Rāma,* Bombay, 1952; Charlotte Vaudeville: *Etude sur les Sources et la Composition du Rāmāyaṇa de Tulsī-Das,* Paris, 1955; F.R. Allchin: *Kavitāvatī*, London, 1964; *The Petition to Rāma*, London, 1966; S. Shankar Raju Naidu: *A Comparative Study of Kamba Rāmāyaṇam and Tulasi Ramayan*, Madras, 1971.

the Rāmāyaṇa studies, too, the contribution of Brockington is the most upto-date.[67] At least, one instance is recorded of a study of the impact of the Rāmāyaṇa on Indian art.[68]

Adaptations Outside India

Another area of Rāmāyaṇa studies in which some significant work has been accomplished during the period under review is the spread of the Rāma-story in Asia and its appearance in diverse form in literature and art.

The Indonesian Rāmāyaṇa is not only subjected to a critical study of Christian Hooykas in 1955 and 1960 but is edited and translated into English by Soewito Santosa in 1980.[69] E.C.G. Barett pursues a question which R.O. Winstedt dealt with in 1944 and published in 1966 a paper entitled *Further Light on Sir Richard Winstedt's 'Undescribed Malay Version of the Rāmāyaṇa'*.[70] P.L. Amin Sweeny's monograph on the influence of the Rāmāyaṇa appears in 1972.[71] Each of the Tibetan, Burmese, Laotian, Mongolian, Kampuchean and Japanese versions has also been dealt with in a monograph or at least in one article during the 1970s, according to thorough-going study of Brockington.[72] An overall survey of all these versions is to be found in V. Raghavan's books of 1975 and 1980 to which reference was made earlier. As an example of a type of popular literature springing from extra-Indian versions of the Rāma-story can be noted in M.L. Manich Jumsai's *Thai Rāmāyaṇa as written by King Rāma I with illustrations from the Mural Paintings in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha and With Illustrations from Stone Rubbings of Wat Poh*, Bangkok, three editions between 1969 and 1977.

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[67]Brockington: *Righteous Rāma*, pp. 226-259 (adaptations in Sanskrit), pp. 266-269 (Jaina versions), pp. 269-276 (South Indian versions) and pp. 279-284 (Tulsī-Das).

[68]Jagadish Mittal: *Andhra Paintings of the Rāmāyaṇa*, Hyderabad, 1969.

[69]Christian Hooykas: *The Old-Javanese Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin*,'s-Gravenhage, 1955; *Old Javanese Rāmāyaṇa*, JORM, 30, 1960; Soewito Santosa: *Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin or the Indonesian Rāmāyaṇa* (Volumes I-III), New Delhi, 1980.

[70]BSOAS—Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, 26, 1963.

[71]P.L. Amin Sweeny: *The Rāmāyaṇa and the Malay Shadow Play*, Kuala Lumpur, 1972.

[72]J. W. de Jong: *An Old Version of the Tibetan Rāmāyaṇa Story*, T'oung Pao, 58, 1972; *The Tun-Huang Manuscripts of the Tibetan Rāmāyaṇa Story*, IIJ, 19, 1977; U. Thein Han: *The Rāmāyaṇa in Burma*, Studies in Indo-Asian Art and Culture, Volume II, New Delhi, 1973; Sachchidanand Sahai: *The Rāmāyaṇa in Laos: A Study of the Gvay Dvôrahbi*, Delhi, 1976; C. Damdisürèn: *Ramajana Mongold Dèlgèrsèn n'*, Ulaanbaatar, 1976; Saveros Pou: *Rāmakerti (XVI^{e}-XVII^{e} Siècles)*, Paris, 1977; *Etudes sur le Rāmakerti* (XVI^{e}-XVII^{e} Siècles), Paris, 1977; Minoru Hara: *Japanese Versions of the Rāma Story* in *The Rāmāyaṇa Tradition in Asia*, edited by V. Raghavan, New Delhi, 1980. See Brockington, Ibid. Chapter 9.

Conclusion

This brief survey of the Rāmāyaṇa studies since the 1950s not only vouches for the wide range of interest they cover but also testifies to Robert P. Goldman's observation that the Rāmāyaṇa has "fascinated a whole tradition of modern scholarship both in India and the West." As he states further, we have "witnessed the growth of an enormous body of scholarly pseudo-scholarly, sectarian and popular literature on the Rāmāyaṇa, Rāma, and the Rāma cult and literature." He is indeed right when he says that "one could compile quite an extensive negative bibliography of Rāmāyaṇa studies" as the corpus of writings in existence "includes an extra-ordinary variety of works ranging from editions, translations and serious research into the language, metrics, bizarre retellings, traditionalist apologia and wishful fantasies about air-borne monkeys, Indian pharoahs and long-tailed tribal peoples."[73]

It is not quite clear whether Goldman has in mind also the incredible number of popular articles which appear ever so frequently in newspapers and periodicals in both English and national languages in India, Sri Lanka and Nepal as well as Bangladesh—though not so frequently. Hardly a week would pass in any one of these countries before someone with avowed objectivity and seriousness attempts to clarify some mysterious point in the story of Rāma, whether it be the location of Lankā, the ten heads of Rāvaṇa, the identity of Vānaras or the 'legal' and 'moral' implications of the Rāma's rejection of Sītā. To these writers and their readers, all these are issues of paramount importance and the heat and the sparks they generate in their controversies bespeak the Rāmāyaṇa's persisting fascination at the popular plane.

I have, to the extent possible, concentrated on the serious works of academics whose interests centre on literary, historical, socio-economic and cultural aspects of a massive literary movement whose peak is marked by the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki. These scholars have raised more questions than they have been able to answer. What the works of Goldman and his colleagues on the Princeton Rāmāyaṇa Translation Consortium and of Brockington show so convincingly is that, even forty years from now, a survey similar to mine in these pages will bring to light an unabating will and interest on the part of competent and devoted scholars to delve deeper into the riddles of Rāmāyaṇa.

Acknowledgements

Besides expressing my indebtedness to Goldman and Brockington whose excellent works inspired and assisted me in no mean measure in writing this Preface, I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to Dr. Yogesh Atal of UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, and Dr. Dilip

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[73]Goldman: *The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: An Epic of Ancient India, Volume I, Bālakāṇḍa,* p. 3.

Padgaonkar of Times of India, New Delhi, for their assistance in arranging this reprint to be brought out in India. It is the latter who persuaded me to write this long preface to give the readers some idea of the burgeoning interest of scholars in the subject-matter of this book. My grateful thanks are also due to Mr. Shakti Malik of Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, for undertaking to publish this work.

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PREFACE

"*Ideally social tradition is one.*
The man of today is theoretically heir
to all the ages, and inherits the
accumulated experience of all his forerunners".

Gordon Childe: **What Happened in History.**
1946, Page 17.

It is this important fact which induces us to study the social traditions and conditions of ancient India whose civilization has been a strong influence in moulding both spiritually and materially the way of life and the social organization of practically all the nations of the East. Though the study of the social conditions of ancient India has a special significance to these nations, its universal usefulness cannot in any way be underrated. After all, the achievements of the ancient Indian are ultimately the achievements of mankind and the social history of India — as is the case with any other country — reflects the struggle of man to establish what in course of time evolved into the complicated organization which is our society.

The social conditions of ancient India have to be patiently reconstructed by gathering together the data available from archaeology and literature. It is impossible for one individual, even in a lifetime, to examine critically all the information at his disposal. To the archaeologist India presents a fund of sociological data covering, at least, over five thousand years. And the student of her literature finds more elaborate and informative evidence in literary works, the earliest of which cannot under any circumstances be dated later than 1000 B.C. A careful study of the facts so available is absolutely necessary if we are to have a complete and reliable picture of the ancient Indian society. This has been attempted by various scholars who specialized in particular aspects of the literature.

Besides the Vedas which include the Saṃhitas, the Brāhmaṇas, the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads, the two epics have been considered to to be of utmost importance as sources for the reconstruction of the social conditions of ancient India. The Mahābhārata which definitely offers more data has been amply exploited especially by E. W. Hopkins whose "Social and Military Position of the Ruling Class in Ancient India" and "Epic Mythology", in addition to his articles in JAOS etc., are significant contributions to the subject.

It has to be admitted that comparatively less work has been done on the Rāmāyaṇa. Though there are a number of books and articles on the linguistic, textual and literary aspects of this epic its sociological data have not been sufficiently treated. In 1888 Schoebel examined the Rāmāyaṇa from the point of view of religion, philosophy and morality in his "Le Rāmāyaṇa au point du vue religieux, philosophique et moral." Some sections of Vaidya's "The Riddle of the Rāmāyaṇa," Sidhanta's "Heroic Age of India," Dikshitar's "War in Ancient India" and Hopkin's works deal with the Rāmāyaṇa data on the social conditions. In 1941 P. C. Dharma discussed the political and judicial conditions reflected in the Rāmāyana in her "Rāmāyaṇa Polity." And among the numerous articles dealing mostly with vexed questions such as the location of Laṅkā, the genuineness of the Uttarākāṇḍa etc., there are a number of contributions of sociological interest by Pargiter (1894—1915), Ramdas (1925—30), Dikshitar (1933), Dharma (1937—49), Vyas (1946—51) and Walter Ruben (1950). Besides these are two works with a predominant spiritual or moral bias on the Rāmāyaṇa, namely, "Studies in Rāmāyaṇa" by K. S. Ramaswami Sastri and "Lectures on the Rāmāyaṇa" by V. S. Srinivasa Sastri. Thus, although it is true that most of the scholars who worked on the Mahābhārata occasionally referred to the Rāmāyaṇa, the paucity of critical studies on the data on ancient Indian society as available in the Rāmāyaṇa is quite evident.

It is to satisfy this need that the research, the results of which are enunciated in the following ten Chapters, was undertaken. While in the first Chapter our attempt is to establish the history, the date and the historicity of the text which is our source-book, the rest are devoted to the study of as many aspects of ancient Indian society as is practicable. No less than fifty-five different aspects are dealt with in these ten Chapters and in order to make the thesis as complete as is possible, even a Chapter on the geographical data, which is naturally less interesting, had to be included as our second Chapter. However, the political, the judicial and the military conditions are excluded from the purview of this work both because they have been discussed by P. C. Dharma in her "Rāmāyaṇa Polity" and by V. R. R. Dikshitar in his "War in Ancient India" and because the thesis was already too unwieldly.

It may be mentioned here that these investigations were undertaken at a time when the library of the University of Ceylon was not sufficiently equipped for any specialized studies on the Rāmāyaṇa. Despite the efforts of the Librarian, the late Mr. R. S. Enright, who spared no efforts in acquiring for the library the books which were needed, a trip to India became absolutely necessary. I had thus to work in the libraries of the University of Madras, of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society and of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona. I am deeply indebted to Professor V. R. R. Dikshitar, Dr. Raghavan and Mr. Venkata Sarma of the University of Madras, to Dr. Mahāmahopādhyāya P. V.

Kane and Mr. P. Sathe (the Librarian of the B B R A S) of Bombay, to Professor P. K. Gode and Dr. R. N. Dandekar of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, for not only giving me every form of assistance in using these libraries but also for their valuable comments. To Professor N. A. Gore, the Director of Extra-mural Studies of the Poona University my thanks are due for having allowed me the use of the valuable catalogue of books and articles which he has prepared by way of revising his "Rāmāyaṇa Bibliography."

I am extremely grateful to my teacher Professor O. H. de A. Wijesekera, Head of the Department of Sanskrit in the University of Ceylon, under whose supervision the researches were done. In him I found a ready helper, a kind adviser and a careful critic. It had been an enviable pleasure to write this thesis under his expert directions.

My thanks are also due to Dr. Betty Heimann, formerly Professor of Sanskrit, Dr. T. R. V. Murti, Professor of Philosophy, Dr. H. C. Ray, Professor of History and to Dr. D. E. Hettiaratchi, Professor of Sinhalese, in the University of Ceylon, for their very useful advice at the initial stages, to Dr. (Miss) Vally Reich, Lecturer in Modern Languages in the University of Ceylon, for her assistance in reading and translating the literature in French and German, to my wife for helping me to check the references and read the typescripts, and last but not least to Mr. D. K. Heyn, the Senior Clerk of the University of Ceylon, for his neat typing.

ANANDA W. P. GURUGE

12th January 1953.

ABBREVIATIONS

Besides the common abbreviations such as A.C., B.C., Cf., p., fn (footnote), the following are used in this thesis:—

ABORI — Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.
AGA — A note on the Geography of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa by Nobin Chandra Das.
AHV — Arctic Home in the Vedas by B. G. Tilak.
AIB — Asoka and his Inscriptions by B. M. Barua.
AIC — Ancient India and Indian Civilization by Masson Oursel, Paul etc.
AIEM — Ancient Indian Education by R. K. Mookerji.
AIHT — Ancient Indian Historical Tradition by F. E. Pargiter.
AIO — Die Literatur des Alten Indien by H. Oldenburg.
AIT — Ancient Indian Tribes by B. C. Law.
AK — Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya.
AKT — Do — Translation by R. Shama Sastry.
All India Ori.Conf. — All India Oriental Conference.
AMI — Ancient and Mediaeval India by Mrs. Manning.
ASAI — The Agrarian System in Ancient India by U. N. Ghosal.
Asu Mook. (or Muk.) Mem. Vol. — Asutosh Mookerji Memorial Volume.
Asu Mook. (or Muk.) Silver Jub. — Asutosh Mookerji Silver Jubilee Volume.
AW — The Art of War in Ancient India by P. C. Chakravarti.
BE — Bombay Edition of the Rāmāyaṇa.
BG — The Bhagavadgītā by S. Radhakrishnan.
BR — A Bibliography of the Rāmāyaṇa by N. A. Gore.
BRP — Beowulf and the Rāmāyaṇa by I. S. Peter.
BRS — The Bengali Rāmāyaṇas by D. C. Sen.
BSW — Buddhism and Society by O. H. de A. Wijesekera.
CAGI — Cunningham's Ancient Geography of India edited by S. N. Majumdar Sastri.
CCI — Caste and Class in India by G. S. Ghurye.
CD — A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and religion, Geography, History and Literature by John Dowson.
CHI — Cambridge History of India.
CHVP — Cultural History from the Vāyu Purāṇa by D. R. Patil.
CLAI — Corporate life in Ancient India by R. C. Majumdar.

CLB	—	Lectures on the Ancient History of India (Carmichael Lectures 1918) by D. R. Bhandarkar.
Com.Vol.	—	Commemoration Volume.
CRB	—	Comparative Religion by A. C. Bouquet.
CRI	—	Caste and Race in India by G. S. Ghurye.
CRW	—	The Cosmology of the Rigveda by H. W. Wallis.
CSM	—	Critical Studies in the Mahābhārata by V. S. Sukthankar.
DNR	—	The Drama and Dramatic Dances of Non-European Races by W. Ridgeway.
DPPN	—	Dictionary of Pali Proper Names by G. P. Malalasekera.
DRJ	—	Das Rāmāyaṇa by H. Jacobi.
DSM	—	Dharma and Society by G. H. Mees.
EHAI	—	The Economic History of Ancient India by S. K. Das.
EHD	—	Early History of the Dekkan by R. G. Bhandarkar.
EIH	—	Ethics of India by E. W. Hopkins.
ELPAI	—	Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India by N. C. Bandyopadhyaya.
EM	—	Epic Mythology by E. W. Hopkins.
ERE	—	Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.
GAI	—	The Theory of Government in Ancient India by Beni Prasad.
GD	—	The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India by Nundo Lal Dey.
GE	—	Goresio's Edition of the Rāmāyaṇa.
GEI	—	Great Epic of India by E. W. Hopkins,
GEL	—	Geographical Essays by B. C. Law.
HAI	—	Heroic Age of India by N. K. Sidhanta.
HDK	—	History of Dharmaśāstra by P. V. Kane.
HHM	—	The Hindu History by A. K. Mazumdar.
HID	—	A History of India by V. S. Dalal.
HIL	—	A History of Indian Literature by H. H. Gowen.
HIT	—	History of Ancient India by R. S. Tripathi.
HLR	—	Hindu Literature by Elizabeth Reed.
HLW	—	The History of Indian Literature by A. Weber.
HOS	—	Harvard Oriental Series.
HSL	—	A History of Sanskrit Literature by A. B. Keith.
IA	—	Indian Antiquary (Journal).
IAL	—	Indische Alterthumskunde by C. Lassen.
IALC	—	Indo-Aryan Literature and Culture (Origins) by N. N. Ghose.
IC	—	Indian Culture (Journal).
IEP	—	Indian Epic Poetry by M. Monier-Williams.
IGI	—	Imperial Gazetter of India.
IHQ	—	Indian Historical Quarterly (Journal).
ILW	—	A History of Indian Literature by M. Winternitz.

ION	—	India Old and New by E. W. Hopkins.
IPM	—	India's Past by A. A. Macdonell.
IPR	—	Indian Philosophy by S. Radhakrishnan.
ISL	—	Indian Serpent Lore by J. Ph. Vogel.
IW	—	Indian Wisdom by M. Monier-Williams.
IWP	—	Indian and Western Philosophy by Betty Heimann.
ISIM	—	Introduction to the Study of Indian Music by E. Clements.
JA	—	Journal Asiatique.
JAOS	—	Journal of the American Oriental Society.
JAS (Bengal)	—	Journal of the Asiatic Society (Bengal).
JBBRAS	—	Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.
JBORS	—	Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society.
JDL (Calcutta)	—	Journal of the Department of Letters (Calcutta).
JGIS	—	Journal of the Greater India Society.
JIH	—	Journal of Indian History, Madras.
JOR	—	Journal of Oriental Research, Madars.
JRAS	—	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.
JRAS (Bengal)	—	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Bengal).
JRASCB	—	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch).
JSVOI	—	Journal of Sri Venkateśa Oriental Institute.
KTAI	—	Some Kṣatriya Tribes of Ancient India by B. C. Law.
LAI	—	Life in Ancient India by Mrs. Speir.
LAR	—	Les Anomalies du Rāmāyaṇa by M. A. Roussel.
LEC	—	Lectures on the Economic Condition of Ancient India.
LIJC	—	Life in Ancient India as depicted in the Jain Canon by J. C. Jain.
LOE	—	Linguistic and Oriental Essays by R. N. Cust.
MG	—	The Mother Goddess by S. K. Dikshit.
MHFS	—	Music of Hindostan by A. H. Fox-Strangways.
NIA	—	New Indian Antiquary (Journal).
NW	—	The North-Western Recension of the Rāmāyaṇa.
ORLI	—	An Outline of the Religious Literature of India by J. N. Farquhar.
OST	—	Original Sanskrit Texts by J. Muir.
PBI	—	Pre-Buddhistic India by R. N. Mehta.
PO	—	Poona Orientalist (Journal).
Pro.Amr.Phil. Soc	—	Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society.
Pro. of Indian Hist. Congress	—	Proceedings of the Indian Historical Congress.
PTS	—	Pali Text Society, London.
PV	—	Poetry of Vālmīki by M. V. Iyengar.

QJMS — Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society.
RAL — Rāmāyaṇa and Laṅkā by Y. P. Iyer.
RH — Rāma and Homer by A. Lilie.
RLH — Rāma's Later History or Uttararāmacarita by S. K. Belvalkar.
ROI — The Religions of India by E. W. Hopkins.
RP — The Rāmāyaṇa Polity by P. C. Dharma.
RRV — The Riddle of the Rāmāyaṇa by C. V. Vaidya.
RVRPM — Le Rāmāyaṇa au point du vue religieux, philosophique et moral by Ch. Schoebel.
SAIP — The State in Ancient India by Beni Prasad.
SBE — Sacred Books of the East Series.
SCSI — Some Contributions of South India to Indian Culture by S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar.
SHSL — A Short History of Sanskrit Literature by H. R. Aggarwala.
SL — Sexual Life in Ancient India by J. J. Meyer.
SLAI — Social Life in Ancient India by H. C. Chakladar.
SLM — Sanskrit Literature by A. A. Macdonell.
SR — Studies in Rāmāyaṇa by K. S. Ramaswami Sastri.
SREI — Social and Rural Economy of Northern India by A. N. Bose.
STR — Studien zur Text-geschichte des Rāmāyaṇa by Walter Ruben.
Trilogie — Trilogie Altindischer Mächte und Feste der Vegetation by J. J. Meyer.
UCR — University of Ceylon Review.
VS — Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and minor religious systems by R. G. Bhandarkar.
WAI — Women in Ancient India by C. Bader.
WAID — War in Ancient India by V. R. R. Dikshitar.
WSSH — Woman in the Sacred Scriptures of Hinduism by Mrs. M. W. Pinkham.
ZDMG — Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.

(I § 1) — Cross references are indicated thus. The number in Roman figures refers to the Chapters while the Arabic figure is for the paragraph.

A Note on the Texts and Methods

An attempt has been made in the following chapters to utilize the data available in all the three recensions of the Rāmāyaṇa. Our principal text for the first six Kāṇḍas was the North-Western Recension (NW)—*Paścimottaraśākhīya—Vālmīki—Rāmāyaṇaṃ* edited by Ram Labhaya, Bhagavad Datta and Visvabandhu Sastri, Lahore 1923 ff, and for the Uttarakāṇḍa the edition of W. L. S. Pansikar, Bombay 1930 (BE). The BE was further used as the text of the Southern Recension while the edition of G. Gorresio, Turin, 1843—67 (GE) represented the North-Eastern or Bengali Recension.

In comparing the three recensions the marginal references in the NW were found very useful. All data particular to each Recension were taken into consideration in not only deciding the authenticity of a verse or a passage but also in observing the peculiarities in the social conditions in each area reflected by the Recensions.

The information in the Rāmāyaṇa was also compared with that available from the Mahābhārata, the Buddhist and Jain Scriptures and other sources such as the inscriptions. It was not always possible to go into the original sources in these comparisons and often secondary sources were utilized as indicated in the relevant footnotes. Further, the opinions of scholars on the particular subjects were taken into consideration and whenever we disagreed with them our reasons were given.

CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE iii
ABBREVIATIONS vii
A NOTE ON THE TEXTS AND METHODS . . xi

Chapter One — INTRODUCTION

A. The significance of the Rāmāyaṇa in Indian Life and Literature (§§ 1—11) . 1
B. The Origin of the Story (§§ 12—32) . . 7
C. Growth of the Epic Rāmāyaṇa (§§ 33—49) . 18
D. The Textual Problem:
(*a*) The Recensions (§§ 50—59) . 25
(b) The Extent (§§ 60—62) . 30
(*c*) The Composition of the Rāmāyaṇa (§§ 63—71) . . 31
E. The Date of the Rāmāyaṇa (§§ 72—90) . 35
F. Historicity of the Rāmāyaṇa (§§ 91—99) . 41
G. The Other Sources (§§ 100—108) . . 45

Chapter Two — THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

A. The Geographical Background of the Rāmāyaṇa Story (§§ 1—52) . . 51
B. Geographical Data of the Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍa (§§ 53—56) . . 72
C. Geographical Data of the Uttara Kāṇḍa (§§ 57—64) . . 77
D. People of the Rāmāyaṇa (§§ 65—87) . 80

Chapter Three — THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

A. The City and Urban Life (§§ 1—15) . . 90
B. Buildings in the City (§§ 16—24) . . 95
C. Rural and Forest Life (§§ 25—29) . . 99
D. Wealth and Prosperity (§§ 30—43) . . 101
E. Occupations, Arts & Crafts (§§ 44—56) . 108
F. Trade (§§ 57—63) . . . 115
G. Transport (§§ 64—73) . . . 118

Chapter Four — THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

A. The Caste System (§§ 1—18) . . 124
B. The Family (§§ 19—31) . . . 133
C. The Individual (§§ 32—36) . . 139
D. The Āśrama System (§§ 37—41) . . 142

Chapter Five -- THE DAILY LIFE

A. Food and Drinks (§§ 1—9) . . 145
B. Dress and Ornaments (§§ 10—20) . . 150
C. Toilette (§§ 21—27) . . 155
D. Furniture and Utensils (§§ 28—30) . . 157
E. Customs and Etiquette (§§ 31—61) . . 158
F. Festivities and Recreations (§§ 62—94) . 169

Chapter Six — SEX, MARRIAGE AND WOMAN

A. Personal Beauty, Love and Sexual Gratification (§§ 1—23) . 184
B. The Institution of Marriage (§§ 24—46) . 194
C. The Wife and the Husband (§§ 47—57) . 204
D. The Position of Woman (§§ 58—73) . 209

Chapter Seven — BELIEFS AND SUPERSTITIONS

A. Worlds, Beings and Gods (§§ 1—18) . 217
B. Popular Beliefs and Superstitions (§§ 19—40) . 224
C. Oath, Curse and Vow (§§ 41—48) . 234
D. Magic and the Supernatural (§§ 49—59) . 238

Chapter Eight — PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

A. Philosophical views (§§ 1—20) . . 243
B. Religion (§§ 21—60) . . 250
C. Karma and Rebirth (§§ 61—79) . . 266
D. Dharma and Morality (§§ 80—106) . . 274
E. Asceticism (§§ 107—116) . . 285
F. Rites and Sacrifices (§§ 117—127) . . 290
G. Death and Funeral Rites (§§ 128—138) . 294

Chapter Nine — EDUCATION

A. Concept of Education and Methods of Study (§§ 1—17) . . 300
B. Subjects of Study (§§ 18—42) . . 306
C. Didacticism and Legends (§§ 43—62) . 316

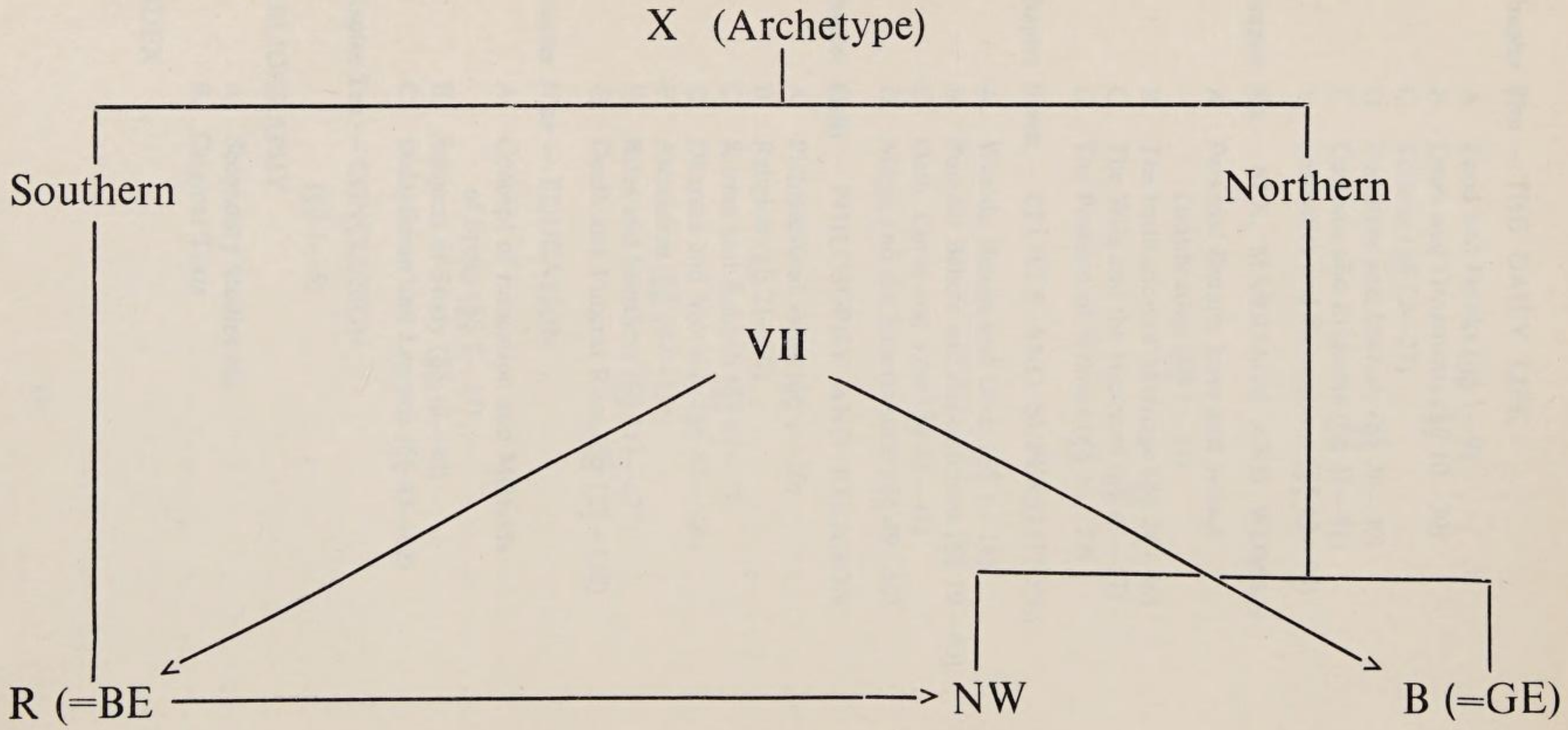
Chapter Ten — CONCLUSION

(§§ 1—5) 326

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Secondary Studies etc. . . . 331
B. Original Texts 336

INDEX 339



See para 59, (p. 29)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Significance of the Rāmāyaṇa in Indian Life and Literature

§ 1. "*Yāvat sthāsyanti girayaḥ*
Saritaś ca mahītale
Tāvad Rāmāyaṇakathā
Lokeṣu pracariṣyati" [1]

SO did Brahmā assure Vālmīki of the immense popularity that his poem was to achieve in the course of centuries. That the Rāmāyaṇa would appeal to the people of all times and climes has been observed from very early days. "As long as the worlds will last", says Rāma to Hanumat, "so long will my story be current"[2]; and again he states in his benediction to Vibhīṣaṇa. "As long as the sun and the moon exist, as long as the earth exists and as long as my story is current in this world.....".[3] Further the Colophon says that the Devas in heaven, along with the Gandharvas, the Siddhas and the great seers listen constantly to the Rāmāyaṇa.[4] Though found in the Kāṇḍas which are generally regarded as late, these citations prove that, within a few centuries of the composition of this epic, its permanent literary and other merits had been noticed by those poets or scholars of yore who inserted these stanzas on the eternal and universal appeal of the Rāmāyaṇa. We shall, here, attempt to assess the extent of, as well as the main reasons for, the popularity of the poem.

§ 2. The epic, Rāmāyaṇa, referred to in its colophons by other names such as *Sītāyāś caritam*,[5] *Paulastyavadham*,[6] *Raghuvaracaritam*,[7] *Raghuvaṃśacaritam*,[8] *Rāmavṛttam*,[9] *Rāmacaritam*,[10] *Rāmakathā*,[11] is said to have been composed for the purpose of augmenting the Vedas (*Vedopabṛmhaṇārthāya*).[12] It is said to have in turn grown out of the Vedas and the Smṛtis (*Śrutismṛtyupabṛmhitam*).[13] Further, the epic is regarded as combined with the four Vedas (*Vedaiś caturbhiḥ samitam*).[14] The attitude of the Rāmāyaṇa towards the Vedas, the

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1 NW 1, 2, 40-41.
2 BE VII, 40, 22.
3 BE VII, 108, 25.
4 BE VII, 111, 3.
5 BE I, 4, 7.
6 BE I, 4, 7.
7 BE I, 2, 43.
8 BE I, 2, 9.
9 NW VI, 110, 33.
10 BE VII, 71, 14.
11 GE V, 31, 35.
12 BE I, 4, 6.
13 NW I, 5, 4.
14 NW I, 3, 2 (not BE)

most honoured of the religious scriptures of the Indians, is clearly designed to safeguard its own popularity. By not refuting the authority of the Vedas it ensures the appreciation of the orthodox sects. Meanwhile, it claims the same degree of sacredness, shared by the Śruti and the Smṛti, by stating that it is not merely a product of the Vedas but that it seeks to augment the Vedas as well.

§ 3. The Rāmāyaṇa is admittedly a *Kāvya*.[1] The Southern Recension calls it the best of the poems (*Kāvyānām uttamam*,)[2] while it is generally regarded as the *Ādikāvya*. The colophon of the North Western Recension in an exclusive verse ventures to consider it the first poem of the three worlds (*Ādikāvyaṃ triloke*).[3] In order to signify that it is a work of a ṛṣi it is occasionally referred to as *Ārṣam*[4] or *Ṛṣikṛtam*.[5] Besides, the Rāmāyaṇa is an *ākhyāna* and also an ancient history (*Itihāsaṃ purātanam*)[6].

§ 4. Unlike the Mahābhārata, which is specifically recognised by tradition to be a *kāvya*, a *śāstra* and a *smṛti*, all in one,[7] the Rāmāyaṇa is not regarded as anything other than a Kāvya. But the Northern Recensions contain a stanza, which states that the reader of the Rāmāyaṇa really learns the great science of Polity (*Daṇḍanīti*) and also the three professions (*Trayīvārtā*), viz. agriculture, breeding of cattle and trade.[8] Moreover, it is said to teach the *Artha* and the *Dharma*, to which another verse adds *Kāma* as well.[9] It is an interesting problem that the Rāmāyaṇa, although held with reverence by the Hindus, is not stated to be conducive to *Mokṣa*. We shall consider this problem in our evaluation of the concept of Dharma, depicted in the Rāmāyaṇa (VIII § 76.)

§ 5. Many are the epithets given to the Rāmāyaṇa in the later portions of the epic itself. Some of them exemplify its religious import. A very common adjective is *Divyam* (divine).[10] Even *Ārṣam* may be reckoned as an epithet with a religious or spiritual significance. Further, it is described as *Pavitram* (pure)[11] and *Vedasamam* (equal to the Veda)[12] and a verse, absent in BE, refers to the underlying influence of the Vaiṣṇava sect in the Rāmāyaṇa by calling it *Vaiṣṇavam*.[13]

§ 6. Other epithets indicate mainly the benefits, which accrue to the pious readers of the Rāmāyaṇa. Thus it is described as *dhanyam* (lucky)[14] *yaśasyam* (bringing fame)[15] *āyuṣyam* (causing

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1 BE VII, 98, 16 et.
2 BE VII, 98, 16.
3 NW VI, 110, 33.
4 NW I, 4, 40.
5 NW VI, 110, 33.
6 NW I, 3, 2.
7 Winternitz:ILW.I p. 321.
8 NW I, 3, 6 (not BE)
9 NW I, 3, 5 (not BE) and N.W. I, 5, 4.
10 NW I, 3, 2.
11 *Ibid.*
12 BE VII. 111, 4.
13 NW I, 3, 2 (not BE)
14 NW VI, 110, 13.
15 *Ibid.*

longevity,[1] *vijayāvaham* (bringing victory)[2] and also *pāpanāśanam* (destroying sins).[3] In addition to these adjectives which, by themselves, suggest sufficient grounds for the high esteem in which the Rāmāyaṇa has been held popularly by the Hindus down the ages, the long lists of benefits in the *Phalaśruti* sections of the poem,[4] describe in detail the material and the spiritual gains, that are the reward for the reading of the poem. Everything ranging from the destruction of all sins to the birth of a son or the easy delivery of a child can be accomplished by the reading of the Rāmāyaṇa. The writers of the *Phalaśruti* are convinced of the magical efficacy of the epic. One of them, in fact, goes to the extent of saying that even the person, who commits sins day in and day out will be freed of all sins by reciting just one *śloka* of the Rāmāyaṇa.[5] It is true that many works of ancient Indian authors contain a *Phalaśruti* section in the colophon wherein are promised the choicest of wordly or spiritual benefits to their readers. The Kaṭhopaniṣad, for instance, promises the reader the eternal glory of the *brahma*-world.[6] The few of the hopes and aspirations of an average individual unmentioned! There is no doubt that the credulity of the Hindu masses is exploited here; but the desired effect, to wit, the popularity of the epic, has been somehow attained.

§ 7. Even without these promises of the later interpolaters, the Rāmāyaṇa, with its noble and soul-lifting theme was bound to be the most popular poem of India. The magnanimity of the characters, the *naivete* of the events, the simplicity of the theme and the spirit of Divine Dharma, which pervades every section of it, have all contributed to make it the most priceless treasure of the people. The Rāmāyaṇa, in the words of S. Radhakrishnan, conveys the "new message of the heroic and the godly in human relations."[7] To K. S. Ramaswami Sastri it is the "interplay of the divine and the human."[8] It is "a supreme ideal of domestic life," whether it is promulgated as "a protest against the prevailing asceticism of the time"[9] or not. It became the law-book of the masses. The conduct of each character became the model after which one wished to mould one's life. As Macdonell states, "Probably no work of world literature, secular in its origin, has ever produced so profound an influence on the life and thought of a people as Rāmāyaṇa. The nobility and magnanimity of

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1 *Ibid.*
2 *Ibid.*
3 BE VI, 111, 4.
4 NW VI, 110, 13-33.
NW I, 3, 7, and 145.
5 BE VII, 111, 6.
6 I, 3, 16.
7 Radhakrishnan: IPR I p. 57.
8 Ramaswami Sastri: SR p. 34.
9 Sen; BRS p. x.

Rāma's character and the conjugal devotion and fidelity of his wife Sītā have, for a great many centuries, exercised a far-reaching moral effect as paragons for imitation among Indians."[1]

§ 8. Besides, the religious significance, which the Rāmāyaṇa acquired in the course of time, made it a book sacred to a section of the Hindus. The identification of the hero, Rāma, with the god, Viṣṇu, no doubt, gave it a new status among the scriptures of the Bhāgavatas or the Vaiṣṇavaites. But this did not by itself assure a wider appreciation of the epic or of the hero. Actually, the view of Macdonnell[2] that the identification of Rāma with Viṣṇu is solely responsible for the worship of Rāma by the Hindus is not quite tenable. As W. Ridgeway points out, "this seems somewhat to over-state the case, for we shall see good reason for believing that it is the human side of the hero-god Rāma-Viṣṇu, and not the divine, which has made the Rāmāyaṇa so popular to this hour."[3] Nevertheless, its religious and moral appeal to even modern Hindus is undeniable. Ramaswami Sastri asks most enthusiastically, "Is it a *Kāvya* (poem) or a *Dharmaśāstra* (manual of ethics) or a *Śaraṇāgati śāstra* (a gospel of self-surrender to God) or a *Mokṣaśāstra* (a gospel of salvation)?"[4] To a Hindu it is all these and much more. His attitude to the epic is one of profound veneration. To him the poem is an authoritative record of the feats of Viṣṇu in his human form; and the repetition of the name of Rāma, as in the *Mahāmantra: "Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare"*, cleanses his soul of all sins. This approach to the Rāmāyaṇa is approved by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri who says, "Even among scholars there have been few who, being Hindus, have not often let go their critical apparatus and surrendered themselves to the rapturous melody of the *ādikāvya*. At such moments, we do not ask ourselves if the summary of the story in the first *sarga* is different from what it is in the third.....A great deal may be said in favour of so abandoning ourselves utterly to the enjoyment of the story. That is the way of religion and morality; it is also, very largely, the method of literary enjoyment."[5]

§ 9. As "a conscious work of art",[6] too, the Rāmāyaṇa occupies a unique place in the literature of India. It excels all preceding it not only in its noble theme—the beautiful and romantic love story of Rāma and Sītā but also in the artistic technique, adopted

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1 Macdonell: ERE X p. 574. Cf. Swami Vivekananda: Complete Works of—Part IV p. 71-72.

2 Macdonell: SLM p. 316: "The belief here expressed that Rāma is an incarnation of Viṣṇu, the highest god, has secured to the hero of our epic the worship of the Hindus down to the present day."

3 Ridgeway: DNR p. 136.

4 Ramaswami Sastri: SR p. 4.

5 Nilakanta Sastri: JOR VI p. 113.

6 Masson Oursel etc.: AIC p. 255.

by the author to narrate his lofty story with such figures of speech and with such aesthetic restraint as to make the Rāmāyaṇa decidedly the *ādikāvya*. No work of India prior to the Rāmāyaṇa, it can be said, attained the same standard of poetical refinement. The diction is dignified, although the language may evoke the criticism of the votaries of Pāṇini.[1] The plethora of similes and metaphors, the bulk of which, being drawn from nature, is peculiar to a poet of an Indian hermitage, add colour to the vivid descriptions of cities, seasons, forests and palaces. The graphic descriptions of the city of Ayodhyā,[2] of Laṅkā and of the palace of Rāvaṇa[3] are a delightful contrast to the sylvan scenes, drawn in the descriptions of Citrakūṭa,[4] Pañcavaṭī,[5] Pampā,[6] and Aśokavana.[7] The ocean,[8] the Himālayas,[9] the Vindhyas and the Narmadā river,[10] and the river Mandākinī[11] have merited clever treatment at the hands of the writer or writers of our epic, while the glorious descriptions of autumn,[12] of Vasanta at Pampā[13] and of the rainy season[14] are essentially the "purple patches" of the Rāmāyaṇa. They evince a keen feeling for the natural beauty, which the Indian, alone, living in the lap of nature, could possess. Indicative of the high imaginative power of the poet is the fifth canto of the most poetic of the Kāṇḍas, i.e., the Sundarakāṇḍa; within the scope of 145 verses, the reader is invited to survey along with Hanumat, the interior of the palace of Rāvaṇa, his divine vehicle, *Puṣpaka*,[15] and the wives of Rāvaṇa, as they sleep after their revelry.[16] The erotic scenes of the fifth canto merge into the vivid description of the *Pānabhūmi*,[17] where signs of by-gone saturnalia present themselves to the searching eye of Hanumat. Laṅkā in flames[18] and the battle scenes,[19] are again pieces of superb imaginative poetry; and no scene is better depicted than that of the night in Laṅkā in which the natural beauty and the erotic activity of the Rākṣasas mingle to form a splendid picture and a pleasant sequence of events, culminating in the moon-rise.[20]

§ 10. The final effect is, indeed, a happy medley, though with the pervading sentiment of pathos which the situations in the story

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1 Nilmadhab Sen: JRAS (Bengal) XVI (1950).
2 NW I, 5.
3 NW V, 1 and V, 2.
4 NW II, 107.
5 NW III, 20, 11-18.
6 NW III, 81 12-21. A more elaborate description of the same forest is found in BE IV, 1.
7 NW V, 9, 5-49.
8 NW V, 73.
9 NW IV, 36, 89-99.
10 BE VII, 31, 14-31.
11 NW II, 108.
12 NW III, 21, 4-23 and NW IV, 23, 7-20. A detailed account of autumn is included in GE IV, 29 and BE IV,30.
13 NW III, 82, 3-53.
14 NW IV, 21, 2-38; more detailed in BE, IV, 28.
15 NW V, 5, 30-40 (not GE) in *Upajāti* metre is a clear interpolation.Cf. the scheme of numbering in the text.
16 more detailed in GE V, 13, 55-71.
17 NW V, 6.
18 NW VI, 54. 4-40.
19 NW V, 38-44.
20 NW V, 3.

evoke in no mean measure. It is a fantasia[1] and as J. J. Meyer says it is "essentially soft, dreamy, fantastic and deeply religious."[2] The Rāmāyaṇa is the model *Kāvya*; it is the earliest unitary work embodying the tradition of ornate poetry, which began with the *Uṣas* hymns of the Ṛgveda. It is not merely the chronological precursor of the artistic epics of the great masters of the Classical Period, but it is in itself the source of poetic inspiration and the store-house of imagery for all of them. K. A. Subrahmania Iyer rightly concludes his survey of the Rāmāyaṇa imagery with the observation that "the content of Vālmīki's imagery persists to a very great extent in later poets, whose works can therefore be better understood with reference to the Rāmāyaṇa."[3] The literary appeal of the Rāmāyaṇa to a modern reader is evident from the beautiful verse of the German poet Rückert:—

> Such fantastic grimaces, such formless fermenting verbiage
> As Rāmāyaṇa offers thee, that has Homer
> Certainly taught thee to dispise; but yet such lofty thoughts
> And such deep feeling Iliad does not show.

§ 11. The Rāmāyaṇa also served as the source of themes for later writers. While Aśvaghoṣa's indebtedness to the epic is evident, Kālidāsa, the greatest poet of India, explicity admits his dependence in the famous lines of the Raghuvaṃśa:

> *Atha vā kṛtavāgdvāre*
> *Vaṃśe 'smin pūrvaśūribhiḥ*[4]

Moreover, Chapters IX to XV of the Raghuvaṃśa are a summary of the Rāmāyaṇa; the title of Kālidāsa's second epic, Kumārasambhava, appears to be suggested by the Bālakāṇḍa.[5] While Mallinātha quotes a view, current in his days, that the Meghadūta was composed after the message of Hanumat to Sītā,[6] a modern Indian scholar attempts to prove that the model for the Abhijñāna Śākuntala, too, was the Rāmāyaṇa.[7] The other great dramatist, Bhavabhūti, goes back to the Rāmāyaṇa for the plots of his celebrated dramas, the Mahāvīracarita and the Uttararāmacarita. Numerous are the attempts, in Sanskrit, of the later poets and dramatists to retell the story of the exploits of Rāma; in fact, Dhanañjaya advocates the examination of the Rāmāyaṇa, among other works, before composing a story, i.e.

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1 Cf. Hopkins: CHI p. 264. "It is a polished fantasia, the first example of the Kāvya or 'artificial' poetry, which appeals to the Hindu taste much more than does the rough genuineness of the Great Epic.
2 Meyer: SL I p. 2.
3 Subramania Iyer: JOR V p. 155.
4 I, 4.
5 NW I, 33, 30.
6 "*Sītām prati Rāmasya Hanumat-sandeśam manasi nidhāya meghasandeśaṃ kaviḥ kṛtavān ity āhuḥ.*" Comm. on Verse 1, Meghadūta.
7 Varadacharya: JSVOI II, p. 303. "*Evam atra rūpake vastu Rāmāyaṇād eva gṛhītvā viparinamya Kālidāsamuninā samyojitam.*"

Ity ādy aśeṣam iha vastuvibhedajātam
Rāmāyaṇādi ca vibhāvya Bṛhatkathañca[1]

The Prakrit poets too utilised the theme of the Rāmāyaṇa in such poems as the Paumacariya and the Setubandha. In the vernaculars a number of versions has made their appearance. The Hindi poem, Rāmacaritamānasa of Tulasi Dās (15th century), is a work of no mean poetic value and the Tamil version of Kambar (12th century), with its innovations in the story, is a poem of high literary merit. The Bengali versions, generally, are said to follow a tradition which is even different from the Sanskrit tradition.[2] The Marathi tradition claims no less than 108 versions of the Rāmāyaṇa of which 77 are printed and 11 are found in Manuscripts. The *Mantrarāmāyaṇa* is said to be the best of these. The fact that it spread in Greater India is copiously proved by the versions—though somewhat variant—current in Tibet, Java, Siam etc. In Ceylon, too, it was known long before the 6th century. Kumāradāsa, whether he was the king by the name of Kumāradhātusena or not, used in all probability this epic as the source for his Jānakīharaṇa. Toṭagamuvē Rāhula, a poet of the 15th century, condemns it as a mere fabrication.[3] This attitude towards the epic seems to have dissuaded the Sinhalese writers from translating it and the earliest translation, of course from Tamil, was published only towards the end of the 19th century.

B. The Origin of the Story.
i Literary Data

§ 12. As the Vedic Literature embodies the earliest comprehensive records of India, it is almost a tradition among the Indologists to trace the origin of anything and everything to the age of the Vedas. If this is done without the preconceived notion that everything Indian should have its beginning, however rudimentary, in the Vedas, it is a safe starting point for one's researches. Examining the data in the Ṛgveda, which appear to have some connection with the main story of the Rāmāyaṇa, one observes that the names of *Ikṣvāku*, *Rāma*, *Sītā*, and even *Lakṣmaṇa* occur as proper names in it. But a closer scrutiny brings to light that the Ikṣvāku mentioned once in the Ṛgveda X, 60, 4 in a doubtful context is only the name of a prince, who according to later interpolations is *Asamāti*.[4] The Atharvaveda, too, mentions Ikṣvāku once only in XIX, 39, 9. But in neither is found any semblance to the mythical son of Manu Vaivasvata of that name who founded the dynasty of the Ikṣvākus in Ayodhyā, which attained fame in the Buddhist Literature as *Okkākā*.

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1 Daśarūpa ed. George C. O. Hass, New York (1912) pp. 38-39.
2 Sen: BRS pp. 70 ff.
3 Kāvyaśekhara: IX, 35.
4 Macdonell & Keith: *Vedic Index*, s.v.

§ 13. *Rāma* which in the Ṛgveda X, 93, 14 is the name of a rich sacrificer bears no semblance to the hero of the story.[1] *Sītā*, likewise, in Ṛgveda IV, 57, 6 and 7 is the "furrow" and even when addressed as "auspicious Sītā, come thou near: we venerate and worship thee"[2] it is only a personification of the furrow or agriculture. Nevertheless, the story of Sītā's birth narrated in the Rāmāyaṇa indicates that Sītā's association with the furrow is to some extent preserved. *Lakṣmaṇa*, in its patronymic form *Lakṣmaṇya* only indicates that it is a very old proper name.[3]

§ 14. Besides these names, there is a stanza in the Ṛgveda which is supposed to be adumbrating the chief incidents of the Rāmāyaṇa.[4] Occurring in a hymn to Agni (X, 3, 3) it runs thus;

Bhadro bhadrāya sacamāna āgāt
Svasāram jāro abhyeti paścāt
Supraketair dyubhir agnir vitiṣṭhan
Ruśadbhir varṇair abhi rāmam asthāt

Griffith, who seems to prefer a mythological explanation of the hymn (i.e., Agni, in the form of Uṣas, adorning the night) translates it as "Attendant on the blessed dame the blessed hath come: the lover follows his sister, Agni far spreading with conspicuous lustre, hath compassed night with whitely-shining garments." The key-word, *Rāma*, has been interpreted as "the night"; and the rendering, on the whole, does not signify any relation with the tale of Rāma and Sītā. On the other hand, the translation: "Bhadra, accompanied by Bhadrā went away. A gallant then went after the accompanying spouce. Then Agni, with his bright flames, covered Rāma with glory,"[5] suggests a faint connection with the story of the abduction of Sītā. But it is enigmatic. Further, the latter interpretation is contrary to the traditional explanation given in the Commentary of Sāyaṇa, wherein *Rāma* is defined as *Kṛṣṇaṃ śarvaraṃ tamas*. Grassman, too, follows Sāyaṇa in giving the meaning of Rāma in this context as "*Nacht*."[6] As such this citation, on the strength of which the story of Rāma and Sītā had been carried as far back as the Ṛgveda, yields to a variety of interpretations; and the most acceptable of them does not provide any evidence as to the existence of the Rāma story in the days of the Ṛgveda. Hence we arrive at the conclusion that it is futile to search for the origin of this popular saga in the oldest record of the Indo-Aryans for all that is clear from the references in the Ṛgveda is that the names, which occur in the Rāmāyaṇa, have a long history of their own.

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1 *Ibid*, s.v.
2 Griffith's translation.
3 Macdonnel & Keith: *Vedic Index* s. Laksmanya.
4 Kamesvara Aiyar: QJMS XVI p. 242.
5 *Loc. Cit.*, p. 242.
6 Grassmann: *Wöterbuch zum Rig-Veda* (Leipzig) 1873, s.v.

§ 15. Coming to the later Saṃhitās, the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads, we observe the names of the principal characters occurring there as well. As in the case of the Ṛgveda, these names, which bear no direct relation to the Rāmāyaṇa story, are no more useful than the host of other names, strewn about in them. In fact some names, such as *Rāma Aupatasvini*, *Rāma Krātujāteya*, *Rāma Mārgaveya* stand distinctly apart from *Rāma Dāśarathī*, who is not mentioned in this literature.[1] As early as 1872, A. Weber expressed an opinion that the first germ out of which the Rāmāyaṇa has grown is represented by "the *saga* found in the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa (II, 3, 10, 1-3) regarding the love of Sītā (that is the field-furrow) for the moon."[2] He supports his argument with reference to the appellation, *Rāmacandra*, which the hero, *Rāma*, acquired in the course of time. We shall examine this hypothesis along with the other theories regarding the origin of the Rāma story in Vedic mythology. (I. §§ 30 ff.).

§ 16. The data from the Upaniṣads, too, are very meagre. If we except the Rāmapūrvatāpinī Upaniṣad, whose late origin is abundantly clear, the older Upaniṣads contain no reference either to the chief characters or the main incidents of the story.[3] The names *Aśvapati Kaikeya* (Chāndogya Upaniṣad V, II, 4), *Janaka Vaideha* (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad III, 1, 1 and IV, 3, 1) and *Jābāla* (Chāndogya Upaniṣad IV, 4, 1) are of greater importance as regards the chronology and the historicity of the Rāmāyaṇa than as regards the origin of the tale.

§ 17. The Buddhist canonical literature, on the contrary, has a number of references to the characters as well as a version of the story itself. In the Jātaka, a text of the Pali Canon, a series of verses forming the Dasaratha Jātaka is given, one of which actually occurs in the Rāmāyaṇa. In a commentary, written towards the middle of the first millennium after Christ, these verses are elaborated into a story which in broad outlines tallies with the first part of the Rāmāyaṇa story, i.e., the banishment. The main differences are: *firstly*, Rāma and Sītā are brother and sister; *secondly*, Dasaratha does not banish them but sends them out of the kingdom to be safe from the wiles of their step-mother; *thirdly*, they go not to Daṇḍaka but to the Himālayas; *fourthly*, Bharata requests Rāma to return to the kingdom after the death of Dasaratha which took place nine years after their "banishment," and *finally*, Rāma, Lakkhaṇa and Sītā return to Benares (not

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1 Macdonell & Keith: *Vedic Index*, s.v.
2 Weber: 1A, I p. 124.
3 The data from the Upaniṣads have been culled from G. A. Jacob: *A concordance to the Principal Upaniṣads and Bhagavadgita*, Bombay (1891).

Ayodhyā) after completing the twelve years of "exile," when Rāma marries Sītā and ascends the throne.[1] The Buddhist character of the Jātaka story is undeniable. It is solely didactic in purpose and in such details as the mention of Benares as the centre of activity, of the Himālayas as the resort of the "banished" princes and of the marriage of the brother and sister it agrees with conventional themes of the Buddhist legends. But the Jātakas do not appear to be entirely ignorant of Rāma, who was banished to the Daṇḍaka for a verse in the Jayaddisa Jātaka[2] refers to Rāma (mātuposaka) as:—

Yaṃ Daṇḍakāraññagatassa mātā
Rāmass' akā sotthānaṃ sugattā

Besides these, D. C. Sen[3] traces similarities between certain incidents, narrated as episodes in the Rāmāyaṇa, and those in some Jātakas. Thus he discovers the identity between the Sāma Jātaka and the Andhamuni's episode, between the Vessantara Jātaka and Sītā's entreaty to Rāma that he should take her along to the forest and between the Sambulā Jātaka and the threat of Rāvaṇa to eat Sītā up. These incidents, though similar, are not sufficiently convincing because they fall under types, which are universal in popular legend.

§ 18. Whether the Buddhist Jātaka can be reckoned as representing a preceding stage, if not exactly the origin, of the Rāma story is a difficult problem. A. Weber,[4] who suggested that the banishment episode was originally not connected with the abduction episode, sought to establish the indebtedness of the Rāmāyaṇa to the Jātaka for the first episode. D. C. Sen, who also follows Weber in recognising two distinct parts for the epic story, attempts to prove that the first episode of the Rāma story is borrowed from the Jātaka by emphasising the chronological priority of the Jātaka. He says, "A comparative literary estimate of the crude and archaic birth-tales and the grand and artistic Epic has also strengthened my conviction that the former belongs to an earlier period than the latter."[5] He, further, quotes Rhys Davids and Georg Bühler in support of his argument to the effect that the Jātakas, wherein the Buddha is identified, not with an animal but with a teacher or a sage, are the earliest and that they do not describe the conditions of India in the third or fourth century B.C., but in an older era.[6]

§ 19. On the other hand, C. V. Vaidya assures us that "the Buddhistic legend has only adopted and in so adopting distorted a

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1 Fausboll: Jātaka IV, pp. 123-130.
2 Fausboll: Jātaka V, p. 29.
3 Sen: BRS pp. VII-IX and pp. 16-18; p. 21.
4 Weber: 1A I p. 172, Cf. I. S. Peter; BRP p. 14 fn; "But the Jātaka is later than the epic and the theory has been given up."
5 Sen: BRS pp. VII-IX.
6 *Loc. Cit.* p. 6.

story which already existed among the orthodox Aryans of India."[1] He is supported by N. B. Utgikar,[2] whose main argument is that the Jātakas cannot be considered older than the Rāmāyaṇa. He distinguishes between the verses of the Canonical Jātaka and the prose commentary, which is very late. In fact, the commentary marks a period contemporaneous with the commentarial activities of Buddhaghoṣa (5th century A.C.). Utgikar seems not to take into consideration that what was put down in the commentary is actually a tradition, which had been orally preserved. And to explain the divergency in incidents in the two stories, he cites Jacobi (DRJ p.84 ff.) Keith (JRAS 1915 p. 323) and Luders, who "agreed that the Jātaka prose version of the Rāma story presents a later and more confused form of the legend than the Rāmāyaṇa"[3] and proposes, "If the bulk of the commentary originally arose in the far distant island of Ceylon, it is permissible to hold that the general ignorance of the original story on the part of the commentator is responsible for such differences."[4] However ingenious this explanation be, it is far from being accurate. The Ceylonese commentator does not claim any originality on his part; but he only ventures to translate the existing commentaries, from Sinhalese into Pali, so that they may be available to scholars outside Ceylon.[5] The antiquity of the Jātakas, as stories, orally handed down cannot be disputed. Another point which is worthy of comment is that the Dasaratha Jātaka is a confused form of the story of the Rāmāyaṇa. If by any chance the Jātaka was composed after and with reference to the Rāmāyaṇa there is just no cogent reason why it should be so different from it, and also so crude both in theme and presentation.

§ 20. In view of these controversial theories it is obvious that the safest course will be to seek an earlier source which the Rāmāyaṇa itself and the Buddhist Jātaka could have severally drawn upon according to their own requirements. The Buddhists, for instance, found in the death of Dasaratha while his children were away an excuse to philosophize on death while the poet who composed the Rāmāyaṇa moulded it to serve an artistic end.

§ 21. Now where could this source lie? J. Przyluski conjectures that this common source can be the Rājavaṃśa of the Buddhist Sanskrit work, Mahāvastu.[6] His main reasons are that the Rājavaṃśa was at a certain stage "non-specifically Buddhist" and that the verse (NW 1.5,3) of the Rāmāyaṇa, i.e.

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1 Vaidya; RRV p. 69.
2 Utgikar; JRAS (Centenary Supplement) p. 205 f.
3 Loc. Cit. p. 206.
4 *Loc. Cit.*, p. 208.
5 Cf. Sumaṅgalavilāsinī (PTS 1886). Part 1 p. 1 verses 6 and 7.
6 Przyluski: IHQ XV p. 292.

Ikṣvākūnām idam teṣāṃ vaṃśe rājñāṃ mahātmanām
mahadutpannam ākhyānaṃ Rāmāyaṇam iti śrutam.[1]

can be interpreted as "This great tale (*ākhyānam*) called the Rāmāyaṇa has its origin in the chronicle of the magnanimous Ikṣvāku kings." But it will suffice to conclude that all these versions of the story go back to the "floating literature" from which the Brahmans, the Buddhists and the Jains adopted what was useful for the illustration of their beliefs and teachings.[2]

§ 22. Another theory as regards the origin of the Rāma story is that of Greek influence. It was Dion Chrysostomos, who recorded: "At that time, people say, even among the Indians the poetry of Homer was sung, having changed it into their own language and dialect."[3] Depending on this statement, some Western scholars, among whom is Weber, have concluded that the story owed its origin to the Greek epics. "In the existing condition of the text", says Weber, "however, we find unmistakable indications that the influence of Greece upon India was already firmly established."[4] Furthermore, he traces even the stories of Vijaya and Kuveṇi, of Udeni and the wooden elephant and of the Jātakas to the Greek stories of the adventures of Odysseus, of the Trojan horse and Aesop's fables respectively.[5] The similarities among them all are undisputable; but the conclusions that can be arrived at by examining the similarities are naturally divergent. The oddity of the situation will be very clear when it is taken into consideration that the similarities in character between Agamemnon and Sugrīva, Patroklos and Lakṣmaṇa, Nestor and Jāmbavant, Odysseus and Hanumat, and Hektor and Indrajit are advanced by the French translator of the Rāmāyaṇa, Hippolyte Fauche, to substantiate the theory that "Homer has borrowed the materials for his work from that of Vālmīki."[6] As such it is absurd to attempt to trace the influence of the Greeks over the Indians or *vice versa* because the themes which are similar are the common experience of several nations at least of the Indo-European group and they yield universally to poetic treatment.

ii Psychological Basis

§ 23. Apart from attempts to trace the origin of the Rāma tale to the available literary sources of yore, scholars have also endeavoured to picture the probable concepts of the author or

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1 Reading according to BE I, 5, 3.
2 Winternitz: ILW. I p. 314.
3 Reiske's Edition p. 253, quoted in Greek by Monier-Williams: IW p. 316 fn.
4 Weber: IA, I p. 252.
5 *Loc. Cit.*, pp. 173-174.
6 *Ibid*, p. 173.

authors, which found unconscious expression in the incidents of the story. Some of them regard the tale of Rāma to be an allegorical representation of an historical event. Basing their reasoning, in all probability, on the belief that one of the main contributions of the Aryans to Indian civilization was agriculture, the wanderings of Rāma in the forest of the Deccan has been interpreted as the protection of agriculture from the aborigines of the south.[1] Weber, further, looked upon the saga as originating in an agricultural myth, which sought to represent "the adoration of a demigod bearing the name of Rāma and regarded as the guardian of agriculture, but hindered in his beneficent activity by a temporary exile (possibly the winter?) and also of the field-furrow defied under the name of Sītā."[2] Barth, too, concluded that it was possible to trace in the saga an agricultural myth, concerning Rāma and Sītā, who, he thought, "would be deities who preside over the sowing."[3] As the very legend about the birth of Sītā out of the furrow which was been ploughed by Janaka suggests, Sītā has had a faint association with agriculture. In the Ṛgveda, as it was pointed out earlier, Sītā is the personification of agriculture or furrow and is invoked for fertility and fecundity. Later a festival in honour of the ploughing deity was called "*Sītājaññā*."[4] Whatever be the connection of Sītā with agriculture, it is somewhat far-fetched to regard the whole story of Rāma and Sītā as an allegorical representation of agriculture.

§ 24. Weber, again, proffers another explanation. He considers the Rāma story to be an allegory, which "is applied to an historical fact, namely, to the spread of Aryan civilization towards the south, more specially to Ceylon. The characters are not real historic figures, but merely personifications of certain occurrences and situations."[5] This view is, indeed, more probable. The Aryanisation of the Deccan and of South India was still fresh in the memory of the people at the time of Rāmāyaṇa. It was begun not so much by the warrior, who raided the territories of his southern neighbours but by the ṛṣis, who in their search for tranquillity penetrated the thick jungles of the Deccan, wherein they established hermitages which were essentially the pockets of Aryan civilization.

§ 25. The greatest of those sages, who carried the torch of Aryan civilization to South India, is Agastya, whose name is the most revered in the folklore of the south; in fact, even the earliest Tamil grammar is ascribed to him. Agastya in Rāmāyaṇa, claims the credit for his attempts towards the Aryanisation of South India in a con-

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1 *Ibid*, p. 253.
2 *Ibid*, p. 253.
3 Masson Oursel etc. AIC p. 257.
4 Jain: LIJC p. 89.
5 Weber: HLW p. 192.

versation with Rāma which is preserved only in the NW recension.[1] It is possible that some of the advanced tribes of the south came in contact with the sages and acquired such Aryan institutions as the Vedic ritual and the Sanskrit language. Perhaps, the ability of Hanumat to converse in Sanskrit like a Brahman may indicate such a cultural contact between the sages and the indigenous tribes (IX §, 3). Moreover, a duty, which Rāma had to perform during his sojourn in the Daṇḍaka forest was the protection of the ṛṣis from the attacks of the aborigines.

§ 26. In the policy, adopted by Rāma in his dealings with the two kingdoms of the south, he agreed in some respects with such conquerors of South India in historical times as Samudragupta: the kingdoms were not absorbed into a wide empire but the local kings and chiefs were brought under the suzerainty of the conqueror. Rāma deposed the two kings and substituted his nominees, while Samudragupta deposed the kings and reinstated them. These facts, no doubt, show a certain amount of familiarity on the part of the Rāmāyaṇa with the Aryanisation of South India but it is just not possible to overemphasize this familiarity to establish the theory that the story of the Rāmāyaṇa, which consists of a variety of themes other than that of marching to and conquering the south, is an allegorical representation of the Aryanisation of South India. This great epoch in the history of the Aryans in India may have influenced the theme to some extent but as in the previous case of the agricultural allegory, its contribution to the fashioning of the tale is partial.

§ 27. Talboys Wheeler's[2] view, that the war between Rāma and Rāvaṇa is a poetic version of the conflict between Brahmanism and Buddhism in Ceylon is almost an extention of the above theory. In fact Weber supported it in his famous monograph, where his fifth conclusion runs as follows: "It is certainly at least possible that Wheeler is right when he refers to the conflict with the Rākṣasas in Ceylon to anti-Buddhistic tendencies."[3] In a later essay which was subsequent to Lassen's criticism of his monograph, Weber explains that his own views are not settled on either side viz., the Aryanization theory and the Brahmanism-versus-Buddhism theory "but rather tend to combine both theories and moreover to establish a third object as the probable original purport of the poem viz., the restoration of the national gods, the bringing back the hearers to their allegiance to the Brahmanical gods."[4] This theory cannot stand the test of history

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1 NW III, 17, 14-26.
2 Talboys Wheeler: *The History of India* II (Calcutta, 1869) pp. 659 ff.
3 Weber: IA, I p. 252.
4 Weber: IA, IV p. 247.

for little inimical feeling existed in religious matters between the Ceylonese and Indians, and, even if there were political misunderstandings between them, they had never been strong enough to form the background for a national epic, especially of the calibre of the Rāmāyaṇa. Further, the chronogical basis (i.e. 10th century A.D.) on which Wheeler worked out his theory is faulty.

§ 28. The story of Rāma has also been regarded though rather inconclusively, as originating from a moral allegory, representing the "great mystery of the struggle ever going on between the powers of good and evil"[1] as in the idea of the Avestan Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu.[2]

§ 29. Two other interesting conjectures are made by an Indian and a German scholar. R. Shamasastry postulates an astrological basis for the story of Rāma. He says, "Rāma represents the sun, Lakṣmaṇa the Jupiter, Bharata the Venus and Śatrughna the planet Mercury. Rāma's pursuit after a deer implies the sun's march to the asterism Mṛgaśiras indicating the time of the urge of Sītā the ploughshare." And he explains the fight between Vālin and Sugrīva as a *Grahayuddha*, where Vālin is Saturn as indicated by the gold chain round his neck.[3] The same scholar in an earlier work of his gave a different version as follows: "The rainy season with its plough, Sītā, comes to arrive in the Aśvina month, the time of the vernal equinox Hence Rāma, the god of summer solstice has to cross the ocean and go to Laṅkā on the equator, behead the ten heads or recurring ten heads of Rāvaṇa and recover Sītā, the plough, after purifying her in the heat of early summer and give her the legitimate place in the rainy season."[4] Walter Ruben, whose theory is the latest in the field, traces the story of the Rāmāyaṇa to some hunting sagas. "Some parts of the old saga," says Ruben, "can be even already recognised: a primitive pre-historic hunter-saga about the abduction of a woman by a hawk and her rescue from the island of Laṅkā together with a local saga of the building of Adam's Bridge by monkeys, whereby the stone saga and the monkey milieu would suggest again the primitive hunting element; so does also the motif of the two brothers hunting for a hind (in this case the golden deer.)"[5]

§ 30. Apart from these theories as regards the origin of the Rāma story in allegorical representations of historical or cultural events, there is also a school of thought, which attempts to seek the germs of

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1 Monier Williams: IW p. 362.
2 Cust: LOE p. 64.
3 Shamasastry: NIA, V pp. 138-139.
4 Shamasastry: *Drapsā—The Vedic Cycle of Eclipses*, Mysore 1938 pp. 125-126.
5 Walter Ruben: ZDMG, C. 1, pp. 349-350.

the story in the Mythology of the Vedas. It was Hermann Jacobi[1] who promulgated the theory that the "second part of the original Rāmāyaṇa represents a narrative of terrestial events based on mythological elements traceable to the earliest Veda."[2] And later Macdonell supports him by tracing the story to the Indra-Vṛtra myths of the Ṛgveda. He says, "Sītā appears in Vedic literature as the Furrow personified and is accounted the wife of Indra, the god of rain. Rāma, her husband, is probably no other than Indra, his conflict with Rāvaṇa corresponding to the Vṛta—myths of the Ṛgveda."[3] Among the scholars, who accepted this theory, is A. B. Keith who regards it to be "the most convincing yet offered."[4] Weber, on the other hand, had traced the first germ out of which the Rāma saga has grown to a myth, recorded not in the Ṛgveda but in the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, (II,3,10,1-3) as regards the love of the Sītā (i.e. the field-furrow) to the moon.[5] These theories no doubt represent a keen desire on the part of scholars to trace back the story of Rāma to the earliest possible records. While the purpose, in itself, is appreciable, the results of their efforts seem to remain divergent. It is well nigh impossible to be accurate in delineating the relationship of a later legend and an earlier myth not only because no linear descent from the earlier to the later is historically traceable but also because many myths are yet too obscure and yield to a variety of interpretations. As such, one may, at best, arrive only at the tentative conclusion that the similarities between the myths and the legends evince the existence of a certain motif or a mythopoeic pattern among the people, which in course of time decided the form of the myths and legends.

§ 31. Thus analysing the theories, which have been expounded by leading scholars during the last century, and which have been either accepted fully or with modifications by later scholars, we observe that the question of the origin of the Rāma story has been made more and more complicated. Each of the theories, dealt with above, other than of course the view of Talboys Wheeler, brings out some factors which in all probability could have influenced the story of Rāmāyaṇa, which as it exists is anything but a homogeneous product. No less than three cycles of legends (i.e. the Ayodhyā legends of palace intrigue and Rāma's banishment, the Kiṣkindhā legends of Vālin, Sugrīva and Hanumat and the Laṅkā legends of Sītā's abduction and Rāvaṇa's discomfiture) have been combined with

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1 Jacobi: DRJ.
2 Macdonell: ERE X p. 576.
3 Macdonell: IGI p. 238. Cf. also SLM pp. 312 f. For similarities between Vedic myth and Rāma Story see Kamesvara Aiyar: QJMS XVI, p. 241.
4 Keith: JRAS (1915) p. 324.
5 Weber: IA I p. 124.

a number of stray episodes, such as that of Andhamuni, to form a single story. It is interesting to trace the origin of each cycle of legends. Sen[1] is of opinion that the Ayodhyā legends are of North Indian Aryan origin while the other two are South Indian Dravidian products (II.§.81). Suniti Kumar Chatterji,[2] already subscribing to the view that the Rāmāyaṇa is a poem of Eastern India, attributes to all the legends an Austric background.

§ 32. Combining these theories with the literary data already examined, we may conclude:-

1. A literary motif, similar to that of the Rāma story is traceable to the earliest myths of the Veda. But no evidence to warrant any degree of identification is available. And any theory which seeks to trace the story of the Rāmāyaṇa to the Vedic age remains at present purely conjectural.

2. The story of a king called Daśaratha who banished his children to the forest at the instigation of their step-mother, as well as many other stories with incidents similar to those of the Rāmāyaṇa, had been current in the "floating literature" as a literary 'public property',[3] upon which the Brahmans, the Buddhists and the Jains drew freely.

3. Considering the comparatively late date when this literature comes to the fore, we can expect in it not only the legends, which the Aryans brought into India from their original home, but also the legends which they borrowed from the peoples they met both on their way to India and in India, i.e. the Iranians, the Dravidians, the Austrics and others. However, a purely Indian origin of the main story is certain because no traces of it can be discovered among any other Indo-European people, not even among the Indo-Iranians.

4. The characters, Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata, Sītā etc., may have been actual members of the royal line of the Ikṣvākus and the incident which has made such an indelible mark in the popular mind may have actually taken place, though not in all the details that we find in the Rāmāyaṇa.

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1 Sen: BRS p.33
2 Majumdar and Pusalkar: Vedic Age p. 165
3 Winternitz: ILW I.p.314

5. Finally, a poet, in whose mind the great historical events such as the Aryanisation of the South and the wars with the aborigines had created a deep impression, combined the many tales which were prevalent in his day with a superb imagination to produce what ultimately became the most popular tale of Rāma and Sītā.

C. Growth of the Epic Rāmāyaṇa

§ 33. The origin of epic poetry is to be traced in the endeavours of man to gratify two of his fundamental desires, to wit, the curiosity to hear of wondrous and valiant deeds of heroes and the love of praise. As far back as the Ṛgveda, we have hymns describing the heroic deeds of gods and heroes. The Indra hymns,[1] in particular, are replete with the heroic element while the hymns on the victory of Sudās[2] and the defeat of Śambara by Divodāsa[3] are eulogies of two Vedic hero-kings. Besides the praises of mighty deeds, the Ṛgveda has a number of hymns, known as *Saṃvāda sūktas*, which represent a definite stage in the evolution of the Indian epic poetry. As Winternitz has argued, they are half-epic and half-dramatic.[4] The *ākhyānas* or the ballads of the type of the *saṃvāda* hymns originally dealt with mythical personages and the incidents narrated were supernatural. With the rise in importance of the sacrificer, the *yajamāna*, for the continuance of the sacramental tradition, the Ṛgveda included the praises of pious worshippers in the *Dānastutis*.[5]

§ 34. Under the influence of the *Dānastutis* and the hymns of war, the ballads dealing with purely heroic and human deeds could have probably come into existence in the age of the Ṛgveda itself, although no clear traces of such ballads or *ākhyānas* are discernible till we come to the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. While the Brāhmaṇas in general, are studded with numerous ballads or *ākhyānas* by way of illustration and elucidation of rituals, the Śatapatha brāhmaṇa XIII, I, 5 gives a clear indication of their cultivation as a part of the ritual. In the Aśvamedha ceremony, "two Brahmanical lute-players sing (and play) for a year.....(1.) The *Brāhmaṇa* sings by day and the *Rājanya* at night (5).....'Such sacrifices he offered, such gifts he gave!' such (are the topics) the *Brāhmaṇa* sings; for to the *Brāhmaṇa* belongs the fulfilment of wishes.....'Such war he waged,' 'Such battle he won!' Such (are the topics about which) the *Rājanya* sings; for the battle is the *Rājanya's* strength.....To both of them he

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1 I, 32; II, 12
2 III, 53; VII, 18; VII, 20
3 I, 112; I, 116; II, 19; VI, 26; IX, 61
4 Winternitz: ILW I p. 103
5 VII, 18; VIII, 1

presents a hundred."[1] The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa further requires that the '*Rājanya* luteplayer, striking up the *Uttaramandrā* (time) south (of the *vedi*) sings three stanzas composed by himself (on topics such as 'Such war he waged', 'Such battle he won'[2] (XIII, 4, 3, 5).

§ 35. These injunctions prove, *firstly*, that eulogies, quite likely in the form of ballads of the types of the heroic hymns, and the *Dānastutis* were a means of spending the period when the horse wandered from country to country; *secondly*, that the singer was expected to compose the poems himself and, finally, that the singer was amply rewarded for his services. These, when considered along with the evidence recorded in the epics, help us to conclude that the ballads were sung not only in times of sacrifices but also at other times both as a feature of royal dignity and for recreation, and that the bards whose services were in great demand and paid handsomely, composed their own ballads as the occasion required. Normally it was the king who employed them. Thus the bards, who sang to the music of the lute, became the authors as well as the custodians of a mass of ballads, which had been composed on the mighty deeds of the king, for whom they sang, or those of his family. The ballads varied in their themes and accordingly were classified as *Ākhyānas*, *Itihāsas*, *Purāṇas* and so forth. Not all of the mighty deeds they attributed to their patrons and their ancestors were historical, for ballads were also based on the narrative motives current among the people.

§ 36. Those who dealt with the same hero or the same event were grouped together to form *cycles of ballads* and they were transmitted from generation to generation by the bards and story-tellers whom we met in Indian literature under the appellations of *Aitihāsika*, *Paurāṇika*, *Sūta*, *Māgadha*, *Vandin*, *Kuśīlava*, and were looked upon as their most treasured possessions.

§ 37. The Rāmāyaṇa presupposes such a development of the heroic ballads. while the Mahābhārata has come into existence as a result of the compiling together of many cycles of ballads in the form of a central theme and episodes, the Rāmāyaṇa is constituted of mainly three cycles centering around Ayodhyā, Kiṣkindhā and Laṅkā. But the fundamental difference between the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa is that the former preserves its ballads almost in their original form while in the latter the constituent ballads are hardly perceptible. That the Mahābhārata represents the ballads in their most primitive form is clear from the prose statements announcing the speaker, which

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1 SBE XLIV p.285-287 2 *loc. cit.*, p.364

precede every direct quotation. Further, the Mahābhārata is ascribed to *Vyāsa* and Vyāsa—which is a function name more than a personal name—means a 'compiler'; so the author of the Great Epic was in all probability a *compiler* of the cycles of ballads which were sung by the bards.

§ 38. On the other hand, the author of the Rāmāyaṇa was not a mere *compiler* nor is he called so anywhere in Indian literature. The poem in itself shows that it is no haphazard collection of cycles of ballads but a unitary poem, mostly the work of a single poet, who, being the author of the Rāmāyaṇa, the *ādikāvya*, came to be popularly known as the *Ādikavi*. His name occurs in the colophons[1] as Vālmīki. He is mentioned elsewhere in the epic too, once[2] as the author of the Rāmāyaṇa and a few other times as a sage whose hermitage was resorted to by the travellers to the south and west.[3]

§ 39. According to the meagre evidence gleanable from the Rāmāyaṇa, Vālmīki was a sage who was contemporaneous with Rāma and who lived in an āśrama on the bank of the river Tamasā. Cust, however, holds that he "resided on the banks of the river Jumna near its confluence with the Ganges at Allahabad."[4] His hermitage was visited, according to Book VII, by both Sītā and Śatrughna, two of the prominent characters of our poem.[5] Actually, Rāma's twin sons are said to have been born there when Sītā was in exile. Vālmīki composed the Rāmāyaṇa through divine inspiration for, as the legend goes, Brahmā himself appeared before him and requested him to sing the life of Rāma. He completed it in time for the Aśvamedha sacrifice of Rāma and employed the two sons of the hero Kusa and Lava to sing it. The poet, thus, though indirectly, caused the reconciliation between Rāma and the banished Sītā. How much of these narratives are fanciful legends of a later date, we cannot decide just now. But we can be certain that this is not the only story as regards Vālmīki and his Rāmāyaṇa. A popular legend[6] in India describes how Vālmīki was a rogue of a low caste at first and how then he meditated on the formula *Rāma*, taught him by some brahmans as "*marā*", and attained the insight to compose the Rāmāyaṇa. This story further states that when he was meditating an anthill was built around him, thus giving him the name Vālmīki.

§ 40. Weber gives as the eighth conclusion[7] in his monograph: "Vālmīki appears to have belonged to a school of the Yajurveda."

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1 NW VI, 110, 14, 24; BE VII, 111, 1
2 BE VII, 94, 24
3 NW II, 105, 14; VI, 104, 56: BE II, 56, 16-17 (not NW & GE)
4 Cust: LOE p. 58
5 BE VII, 49, VII 66
6 Temple: IA XXVII p. 112
7 Weber: IA I p. 253

He points out that the name Vālmīki is mentioned in the Taittirīya Prātiśākhya (1,9,4), that the names Aśvapati and Janaka occur in the Brāhmaṇas of the Yajur Veda and that the model for the theme of Anasūyā sprinkling *Aṅgarāga* on Sītā is the Moon-and-the-furrow saga of the Taittrīya Brāhmaṇa. He argues further that Bhavabhūti, who composed two plays on the Rāmāyaṇa theme, belonged to a family which studied the Taittirīya. Thus, as Weber concludes, it is quite probable that Vālmīki was a follower of the Yajur Veda, especially of its Taittirīya School.[1]

§ 41. The language of the Rāmāyaṇa, as we have it today, is different from classical Sanskrit mainly because the grammar of Pāṇini, which was regarded "la norme infaillible du pur sanscrit"[2] was not adhered to. T. Michelson came to the conclusion, which was later refuted by Keith,[3] that "the language of the Rāmāyaṇa presents a hodge podge which, in principle, is not unlike that which the language of Āpastamba's Sūtras presents, to wit: a heterogeneous mixture of Vedic, Middle Indian and Classical Sanskrit."[4] The forms given by him are not always exclusively Vedic or Archaic. In reality, as W. A. Roussel in his monograph "Les Anomalies du Rāmāyaṇa" states, the problem of language here is not one of archaisms but one of forms contrary or simply foreign to the grammer of Pāṇini.[5] This applies to the language of the Mahābhārata as well. In fact, we trace in both epics an identical dialect, which we are justified in calling "Epic Sanskrit". The fact that it is "naturally more popular in character and less regular than Classical Sanskrit"[6] has led to a number of theories regarding the linguistic basis of the Rāmāyaṇa.

§ 42. A. Barth[7] and G. A. Grierson[8] have proffered the explanation that it was first composed in some popular dialect, a Prakrit and later translated into Sanskrit. Pargiter upholds the same theory in the case of the Purāṇas basing his argument on peculiarities of language and metre.[9] The only cogent reason why we should prefer this explanation to any other would be the non-existence of Sanskrit as a popular vernacular. But the evidence we get from the Mahābhāṣya, the Rāmāyaṇa itself and the dramas, is sound enough to prove that Sanskrit had been a spoken dialect in the centuries just preceding and following the Christian era. Further no trace of a break in literary

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1 Weber: loc.cit. p.123 ff and p. 123 fn. Cf. Hopkins: GEI p. 368 where he tries to establish the connection between the Mahābhārata and Yajur Vedic School.
2 Roussel: LAR p. 6.
3 Keith: JRAS 1910 p.p. 1321-1326
4 Michelson: JAOS XXV p. 90
5 Roussel: LAR p. 6
6 Hopkins: CHI I p. 220
7 Quoted in Masson Oursel etc: AIC p. 258
8 Grierson: IA XXIII p. 55 f.
9 Pargiter: *The Purana Text of the dynasties of the Kali Age* London, 1913 pp. 77-83

activity in Sanskrit is visible during this period, although the Prakrits were used by Asoka for his edicts. And it is rather incongruous to assume that such a wealth of literary products as represented in the literature of the period could have come into existence in a language which not even the learned spoke.

§ 43. We may here take note of the conclusion which Muir arrives at after examining BE V, 30,17-19. "As the reason assigned in these passages for not addressing Sītā in Sanskrit such as a Brahmin would use, is not that she would not understand it, but that it would alarm her and be unsuitable to the speaker, we may take them as indicating that Sanskrit, if not spoken by women of the upper classes at the time when the Rāmāyaṇa was written (whenever that may have been) was at least understood by them and was commonly spoken by men of the priestly class and other educated persons."[1] As Sanskrit was spoken and understood popularly, there is absolutely no necessity for us to postulate a hypothetical stage, of which we have no definite proof, when the epic existed in some Prakrit dialect.[2] No traces of a precursor of the epic in any Prakrit has been discovered. And the mere existence of a few forms which do not conform to the accepted rules of Sanskrit grammar cannot justify this assumption.

§ 44. On the other hand, Jacobi's view that the Epic Sanskrit represented a vulgar form of Sanskrit as spoken by the unlearned is more probable. The distinction between the epic language and the Sanskrit of Pāṇini, he stated, "consisted only in the degree of purity. The pure or purified language was called Sanskrit. The relation corresponded strictly to that traced by Patañjali between the language of the *Śiṣṭas* and the rest."[3] Hopkins, likewise, opines that "most of the grammatical irregularities in the epic are merely dialectic variations."[4] Representing not only various geographical divisions but also social and educational levels, the language, though primarily Sanskrit, was, no doubt, influenced by such factors as provincialism and Prakritisms. We have to assume that these linguistic peculiarities were either current in the ballads which formed the basis of the epics or were fossilized in the popular speech of the time, when the epics were composed. The latter alternative has the greater probability as the peculiarities are common to both our epics to almost the same degree in spite of the fact that the Rāmāyaṇa, unlike the Mahābhārata which is merely a compilation of ballads, is the work of a poet,

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1 Muir: OST II p. 158
2 Cf. Jacobi: ZDMG XLVIII pp. 407 ff.& Winternitz: ILW I pp.512 ff.
3 Jacobi: DRJ Quoted in Vadekar's translation BR p. 66
4 Hopkins: GEI p. 261 ff.

perhaps a brahman of the Taittirīya school. Some "grammatical monstrosities", which however cannot be explained in any of the above ways, may be what Winternitz calls "solecisms, such as are often committed by uneducated and inferior authors like the Purāṇa composers."[1] The language of the Rāmāyaṇa, therefore, is a popular form of Sanskrit, which has been influenced by Prakritisms, not to speak of the blunders of the interpolaters.

§ 45. "Epic Sanskrit" has developed an idiom of its own. Just as in the Pāli and the Jain Canons, where stock phrases are used in describing identical or similar incidents, so in the epics, there are numerous phrases and expressions, which are repeated throughout. The observations of Hopkins who collected such parallel expressions[2] occurring in the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata lead us to the conclusion that they were in all probability the creations of the early bards, which in the course of time were stereotyped and became a feature of the bardic narratives. At first, as the example of the Pāli and the Jain Canons reveals, the purpose of such stereotyping was mnemonical but the expressions persisted and in the course of time they became a characteristic of the language of the epics.

§ 46. A tradition, the antiquity of which is evident from its being recorded in the Rāmāyaṇa[3] itself, attributes to Vālmīki the creation as well as the naming of the chief metre of the Epic, i.e. the Śloka. The story how Vālmīki, moved by the death of a "*krauñca*" bird, uttered a curse in a metrical form which he named "*Śloka*" had gained currency among the ancient scholars of India as is proved by Ānandavardhana's statement in Dhvanyāloka.[4] *Tathā cādikaver nihatasahacarī-virahakātarakrauñcakrandajanitaḥ Śloka eva Ślokatayā pariṇataḥ.* At best, this legend may represent the stage when the new name for the metre came into existence. Even then the etymology suggested is rather obscure. The metre, in itself, is one of the oldest metres to be used in India for the Epic Śloka is a development of the Vedic *Anuṣṭubh.*

§ 47. The greater portion of the Rāmāyaṇa, just as is the case with the Mahābhārata, is composed in the Śloka metre, which however is of a more refined character than that of the Great Epic. Jacobi[5] explained this phenomenon as due to the fact that the poetic art was first developed in the East and that the Rāmāyaṇa was a work of that region. Hopkins disagrees with Jacobi and says, "Here I

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1 Winternitz: ILW I p. 461.
2 Hopkins: GEI pp. 67 ff and Appendix A pp. 403 ff.
3 NW I, 2, 16—20
4 *Dhvanyāloka* ed. by Kuppuswami Sastri and Chintamani, Madras (1944) p. 163
5 Jacobi: DRJ p. 126

would merely raise the question whether the dictum that poetic art was refined in the East before the great epic arose is not based on the style of the Rāmāyaṇa alone? Products of the same part of the country are Buddhistic and Upaniṣad verses, with which agrees the versification of the Mahābhārata much more closely than does that of the Rāmāyaṇa. The Purāṇas also are eastern and their versification is in general rather that of the great epic. The distinction then is not sufficiently explained by geographical relations. On the other hand the metrical refinement of the U. the Upaniṣads, B. the early Bharata, B.^{2} the later Bharata, R. the Rāmāyaṇa and K. Kālidāsa is in the order of U., B., B.^{2}, R., K., with B^2=R. in some cases, which looks to a progressive development."[1]

§ 48. The ultimate solution of this issue is based on the balance of data in proof of the eastern origin of the Rāmāyaṇa. However, the flourishing of the art of poetry in the Eastern realms of India is obvious mainly from the fact that the degeneration by way of artificiality and elaboration, too, set in at a very early stage in the East, where the bombastic Gauḍī style was prevalent. It is idle to seek for poetic perfection in the unconscious lyrics of the Buddhist works and the Upaniṣads, wherein the main concern of the authors had been not the composition of beautiful verses but the enunciation of a religious or a philosophical notion as lucidly as they could. And even if the versification is weak, the similies and metaphors and such other figures embodied in the religious and philosophical poetry of this region, indeed, evince the background of a developed poetic art.

§ 49. Equally refined, though not as popular, is the *Triṣṭubh* metre of the Rāmāyaṇa. The *Upajāti*—which combines the *Indravajrā* and *Upendravajrā* lines—is, as Hopkins discovered, "almost exclusively the form of Triṣṭubh employed."[2] Some of the most beautiful descriptions of the Rāmāyaṇa are executed in this metre and the Bengali Recension (GE), which, of course, is the most poetical and refined of the three extant recensions, contains comparatively the most number of Triṣṭubh verses in descriptions, and some of the clear interpolations of all recensions are in this metre. Besides the Rāmāyaṇa includes a number of what Hopkins calls "fancy metres" as tag-verses, i.e. the verses, which in the Mahākāvya technique, mark the close of a canto (*sarga*) by being of a different metre from the rest of the Canto. Among such metres the Rāmāyaṇa has in common with the Mahābhārata the following:—

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1 Hopkins: GEI pp. 79-80

2 *loc. cit.*, p. 276

(Upajātis and their components)
Vaiśvadevī
Bhujaṅgaprayāta
Rucirā
Praharṣiṇī
Vasantatilakā and
Mālinī

But the Rāmāyaṇa, alone, has Mṛgendramukha and Asambādhā.[1] It is quite evident that the tag-verses in their fancy metres are later interpolations in the Rāmāyaṇa at a time when the Mahākāvya style was gaining currency. Thus the versification of the Rāmāyaṇa is in itself a special field whose study throws abundant light on the problems relating to the growth and the text of our epic.

D. The Textual Problem

(a) The Recensions

§ 50. The textual problem involved in the Rāmāyaṇa has been most laconically enunciated by Weber in his slogan: "soviel Handschriften, soviel Rāmāyaṇas"[2] (as many Rāmāyaṇas as there are manuscripts). The general disagreement among the extant manuscripts is indeed very great as regards the arrangement of cantos and verses and the choice words; further many manuscripts contain certain passages which are absent in all or some of the others. But the subject-matter remains unchanged. The theme is the same; whereas in the other Rāmāyaṇas of India—for instance the Jaina Rāmāyaṇa and the Kaśmiri Rāmāyaṇa—the story is modified immensely, the manuscripts of the Vālmīki-Rāmāyaṇa, though divergent in minor points, preserve a uniform version of the story. What we have here is precisely, what Hopkins calls, a sort of "concordant discord."[3]

§ 51. Great similarities have been, however, observed among manuscripts, belonging to a geographically limited area. Those of the South of India agree with one another in many respects; so do the manuscripts of the North-Eastern region and those of the North-Western. The manuscripts of each area seem to represent a tradition of their own and hence critical editions of the Rāmāyaṇa, as current in these areas, have been possible. These represent three recensions of our epic.

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1 Hopkins: GEI p. 322
2 Weber: *Uber das Rāmāyaṇa* (1870) quoted by Walter Ruben: STR p. X.
3 Hopkins: JAOS XLVI (1926) p. 211

§ 52. The three recensions, viz. the Southern Recension (i.e. BE), the North-Eastern or Bengal Recension (i.e. GE) and the North-Western Recension (i.e. NW), differ from one another in many respects, of which Jacobi mentions three, viz.

> "1. Each Recension differs from both or one of the others in the common verses, the Southern recension having the more original text.
>
> 2. Each recension has a good number of verses, even longer passages and whole cantos, which are not to be found in one or even both of the others. Comparing the Southern and Bengal recensions we find that one third of the verses are proper to each recension.
>
> 3. The sequence of the verses is often different in two or even three recensions."[1]

Besides, the division of cantos as well as of the Kāṇḍas is peculiar to each recension. There are also additions of minor details in each recension and some of them appear to be regional innovations.

§ 53. Of the three recensions, the Southern Recension has been generally regarded as representing a form closer to the original.[2] It is also observed that the version of the Rāmāyaṇa story in the Mahābhārata (i.e. the Rāmopākhyāna) is more akin to the Southern Recension than to any other. Further, it is the text of the Southern Recension, that was followed by the Commentators such as Rāma Uḍāli and Govindarāja. As regards grammar and style, this appears to be the crudest signifying its closer affinity with the natural style of the ballads which contributed to form the epic; and according to Macdonell, "as the other two arose in the centres of classical Sanskrit literature, where the Gauḍa and the Vaidarbha styles of composition respectively flourished, the irregularities of the epic language have been removed in them."[3]

§ 54. The two Northern Recensions have undergone further development; one major difficulty they present to the text-critic is the divergence among the manuscripts themselves; as Walter Ruben states. "However one can say, an objection to N is that the N—mss., groups and versions, differ much more considerably than those of S, so that frequently nearly every N—ms. has its own particular reading, whereby it becomes highly improbable that in N among the abundant choices one strikes the right reading for the reconstruction of the N.,

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1 Jacobi: DRJ p. 3 as summarised by C. Bulcke; JOR XVII, i p.l.

2 Jacobi: *loc. cit.* p. 3

3 Macdonell: SLM p. 303

not to speak of the archetype."[1] Of them the Bengali Recension is further away from the Southern than is the North-Western Recension. The Bengal version reads more smoothly and elegantly than the Southern and its unique poetic excellence is in itself a proof to the effect that the poetic art was best developed in the East. It may be considered late only in the sense that it represents a further revision of the original as compared with the Southern Recension. Hall's criticism that it is "a modern depravation" and even "spurious"[2] seems very much exaggerated. The greater grammatical accuracy of this version, when explained according to Jacobi[3] as corrections on the part of bards influenced by an advanced culture, shows, again, that the flourishing of the poetic art in the East was responsible for its elegance.

§ 55. On the other hand, the North-Western Recension, though generally similar to the Bengal version, does not vary in style from the Southern so much as the other. C. Bulcke has observed that the North-Western Recension contains much matter which is not to be found in the Bengali but is present in the Southern. And he concludes that the text of the North-Western Recension "at least as printed at Lahore, is contaminated from the Southern."[4] Whether it is due to contamination or otherwise, it is clear that the North-Western Recension represents a half-way house between the other two. While the others seem to contain characteristics peculiar to the area, this has the greater likelihood of being a cosmopolitan version. One may even hazard an explanation that the North-Western region of India, being regarded both in the Upaniṣads and in the Buddhist Jātakas as a centre of learning to which students from other parts of India flocked, was the meeting ground of the two specifically Northern and Southern Recensions of the Rāmāyaṇa. As Louis Renou has stated, one felt as regards the North-Western Recension that "there was an important source which in certain points was already superior to the texts of Bombay, of Kumbakonam or the edition of Gorresio."[5]

§ 56. The original version of the Rāmāyaṇa, upon which the recensions are based, is a matter of controversy. It is, however, agreed that an original unitary form (i.e. an Archetype or *ādi*—form) did exist and in all probability it was the work of Vālmīki; but the methods adopted by scholars to reconstruct this with the aid of the extant recensions have still not led to any conclusive results. Eugeniusz Sluszkiewicz's[6] attempt to compare the similar passages of the Rāmā-

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1 Walter Ruben: STR pp. 55—56
2 Hall's edition of Wilson's Translation of Viṣṇu Purāṇa II, p. 190
3 Cf. Jacobi: DRJ p. 9
4 Bulcke: JOR XVII i. p. 26
5 Renou: JA CCXXXV p. 137
6 Sluszkiewicz: *Przyczynki do Badan nad Dziejami Redakcyj Rāmāyaṇy* Krakow, 1938.

yaṇa, Rāmopākhyāna, Rāvaṇavadha and Jānakīharaṇa is, no doubt, an interesting manner of tackling the problem but his arrangement, as remarked by Pusalkar, seems rather complicated and confusing.[1]

§ 57. Walter Ruben approached the subject from a somewhat different angle, bearing in mind that his method was only partly satisfactory, for he says, "But one will not find a key of universal validity for the fundamental evaluation of the tradition until one has succeeded in distinguishing primary and secondary consensus of the different branches of the tradition. For this purpose our scheme of grouping the sources is not quite satisfactory but at any rate it is one step towards constructing a genealogical tree."[2] He posits an *Ur—text* (an original text), some of whose manuscripts "apparently survived the origin of the Archetype; manuscripts of both survived the gradual development of the two recensions until the four versions came into being, so that the versions at the same time deviated from each other through the distortion and recasting and again they were mixed together so that the pure representatives of the versions are to be located about in the middle of this process in systematic, historic and geographical respects. Then you are surprised to find that there are still comparatively so many remnants of the Archetype in the present manuscripts."[3] This Archetype he arrives at by rejecting the verses, which occur in only one of the Recensions.[4] Ruben's Archetype, so constructed, would count more or less 12,000 ślokas, which is actually the extent of an ancient version of the Rāmāyaṇa known to Kātyāyanīputra. the author of Mahāvibhāṣā.[5]

§ 58. For the reconstruction of an original version of the epic in this manner, we have to disregard the variant readings which occur in the common verses of the recensions. As clearly illustrated by Hopkins, it is almost impossible to decide on a text which will do justice to the equally valid variant readings of the three recensions. In the words of Hopkins, "the words change but the contexts remains. What possible criterion will give us the 'original' form? What was original was the sense, not the precise words in which the sense was conveyed. All our classical notions of a fixed original from which manuscripts vary by the slightest alterations vanish into thin air before such freedom of transmission as is instanced here."[6] He further shows how the bard, who was no messenger with training to deliver his message as *verba ipsissima*, was anxious only to narrate his story and

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1 Pusalkar: *Progress in Indic Studies*, Poona 1942 (edited by R.N. Dandekar) p. 135
2 Walter Ruben: STR p. 56
3 *Loc. cit.*, p. 60
4 *Ibid.*, p. 53
5 Cf. Bulcke: JOR XVII i p.27 and K. Watanabe: JRAS (1907) pp.99 ff
6 Hopkins: JAOS XLVI (1926) p. 209

he did it more or less in his own words. The bards might have had certain catch-words which were remembered for mnemonical purposes.[1] Hopkins's conclusion is that no comparison of the variant readings of recensions will enable one to discover the Archetype or the *adi*—form.[2] He is right because we cannot ultimately reconstruct the exact text of the Archetype, as it existed; but it is still not beyond possibility to reconstruct the contents of the Archetype, to which the passages and verses were interpolated in the course of time by bards of various regions until the manuscripts of the three recensions were written.

§ 59. Therefore, the method of C. Bulcke is more useful. "The comparison of the three recensions from the point of view of subject-matter gives very clear indications as regards the genesis of these recensions."[3] He concludes:

1. That the Northern and the Southern versions evolved from the Archetype X, which is the Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa at the time of the bifurcation,
2. That the Northern developed into the North-Eastern and the North-Western and
3. That the North-Western. in its present form is contaminated by the Southern Recension.[4] (I § 55)

The fact that the Uttarakāṇḍa preserves an unusually great degree of similarity in all recensions is explained, as Jacobi also did, to be due to its later development. Bulcke, moreover, puts his conclusions in a diagram, which purports to lay down the pedigree of the different recensions.[5] Bulcke's theory regarding the development of the recensions of the Rāmāyaṇa is by far the most convincing.

X (Archetype)

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1 *loc. cit.*, p.206
2 *loc. cit.*, p.206
3 Bulcke: JOR XVII, i p.26
4 *loc. cit.*, p.26
5 *Ibid.*, p.27

(b) The Extent

§ 60. The Archetype which might have perhaps contained 12,000 ślokas, as evidenced both by the reference in Mahāvibhāṣā and by the researches of Walter Ruben, could have been the work of the poet Vālmīki. But it has been substantially increased quite likely by alien hands before the latest portions of the *Anukramaṇī* (the list of contents) and the colophon came into existence for we hear in them specifically of a Rāmāyaṇa of 24,000 ślokas[1] in 500 cantos[2] divided into six kāṇḍas and a supplementary kāṇḍa.[3] The Northern Recensions further give in a detailed list of contents arranged according to the kāṇḍas, the number of cantos and verses in each kāṇḍa as follows:—

	NW[4]		GE[5]	
	Cantos	**Verses**	**Cantos**	**Verses**
Bālakāṇḍa	68	2850	64	2850
Ayodhyākāṇḍa	80	4170	80	4170
Āraṇyakāṇḍa	114	4150	114	4150
Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa	64	2925	64	2925
Sundarakāṇḍa	43	2045	43	2045
Yuddhakāṇḍa	105	4500	105	4560
Uttarakāṇḍa	90	3960	90	3360
	564	24600	560	24060

§ 61. The extant recensions, however, do not preserve this scheme. The number of cantos and verses in a kāṇḍa is apt to vary in each recension because no regular system of dividing the story into kāṇḍas had been followed. Further the length of the cantos, also, differs in each recension because, sometimes, one canto of a particular recension is split up into two or three in the others or several cantos of one are combined to form a single canto in others. The figures tabulated above refer to the form of the epic at the time when the *anukramaṇī* was composed and do *not bear any semblance to* what it is today. For instance, the first six kāṇḍas of the NW as it is today have 72, 128, 82, 62, 100 and 110 cantos respectively as opposed to 68, 80, 114, 64, 43 and 105 given in the *Amukramaṇī*. The Southern Recension does not include in its list of contents anything similar to the above scheme of division of kāṇḍas and cantos; it too differs from

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1 NW I, 3, 144; BE VII, 94, 25
2 BE VII. 94, 26
3 BE I, 4, 2
4 NW I. 3
5 GE I, 3

the given schemes of both the Nothern recensions in so far as it contains 86 cantos more and 72 verses less than the NW while it exceeds the GE by 90 cantos and 468 verses. But all recensions agree in containing more or less 24,000 verses.

§ 62. When it is considered that nearly one third of each recension is proper to itself, the number of verses (counting the common ślokas once only) belonging to the Rāmāyaṇa recensions is about 40,000 of which just about 12,000 can be regarded as forming the kernel of the epic. The rest, however, are accretions added to the nucleus of the Rāmāyaṇa in the course of time as the recensions developed independently or with mutual influence in their geographically confined areas. The problems relating to the extent of the Rāmāyaṇa in its three recensions cannot indeed be solved fully unless and until all manuscripts belonging to the three recensions are collated; it is hoped that this will be accomplished in the course of the preparation of the critical edition of the epic by the Sayaji Rao University of Baroda under the guidance of Bhat.

(c) The Composition of the Rāmāyaṇa

§ 63. As the large number of verses which we are induced to regard as accretions shows, the Rāmāyaṇa is anything but an entirely homogeneous epic. Each recension contains many passages and verses, which cannot be attributed to Vālmīki, and far less to one definite era. The stages of the composition of our epic, therefore, should be fairly clearly defined before we attempt to fix a date for it, or utilize the data in it for the study of the social conditions of Ancient India.

§ 64. Since the publication of Jacobi's researches on the Rāmāyaṇa it is generally accepted that the original poem of Vālmīki consisted of five kāṇḍas (II to VI). The first Kāṇḍa as well as the seventh kāṇḍa has been considered to be of late origin. However, it is necessary that at least some parts of the first kāṇḍa should have been a genuine part of the story because the story otherwise has an abrupt beginning, which is contrary to the narrative technique of India. Jacobi considered that BE 1, 5, 5-8 were the first lines of Vālmiki's work.[1] Excepting for a few cantos, which form an essential introduction to the story, the major part of the first kāṇḍa appears to be spurious on account of the numerous internal contradictions, the character of the contents and the drab narrative style as opposed to the poetic elegance of the other five kāṇḍas.

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1 Jacobi: DRJ p.55

§ 65. The seventh kāṇḍa is clearly a late interpolation. Its contents, which like those of the first kāṇḍa form "an encyclopaedia of mythology",[1] and its style are cogent proofs while the colophons of the Rāmāyaṇa itself throw further light on its being regarded a supplementary kāṇḍa. The same colophons prove that the seventh kāṇḍa is even later than the first by referring to the former as supplement to the six kāṇḍas.[2] A *phalaśruti* at the end of the sixth kāṇḍa, also shows that the original Rāmāyaṇa ended there. In India there had been a tradition, which excluded the Uttarakāṇḍa from reckoning; Bhaṭṭi, in his Rāvaṇavadha, ignores it while in the south Pillailokam Jīyar, the annotator of Ṇāthamuni's verse on the Tiruvāymoḷi, says "*Aṅgu-ṣaṭkāṇḍamāyirukkum.....adu Rāmāyaṇam.....*".[3] Also Kamban, the reputed translator of the epic into Tamil, omits this kāṇḍa.

§ 66. But the attitude of some modern Indian scholars to the Uttarakāṇḍa has been somewhat different. Emphasizing that the internal evidences in the works and "the verdict of the Indian tradition" should be taken into consideration, P. P. S. Sastri[4] affirms that Vālmīki composed his Rāmāyaṇa in seven books of 24,000 stanzas. Kibe,[5] on the other hand, assumes that the Rāmāyaṇa cannot be a lyrical composition as the tragic end shows and that the disappearance of Sītā is relegated to this kāṇḍa so as to honour the rules of poetics; he, thus, concludes that the Uttarakāṇḍa is an essential part of the epic and says, "It is the dislike of the Indians to tragedy that makes them feel shy of this kāṇḍa." Barua, again, is not in favour of rejecting the whole of the Uttarakāṇḍa as an interpolation, but he does not ignore the numerous late additions to it, for he says, "It seems to me that the end of the original epic was tragic and Sītā's disappearance into the bosom of the earth was very likely the culmination. Hence, the Uttarakāṇḍa is a prodigious accretion round a nucleus which originally formed an integral part of the Rāmāyaṇa".[6] Vaidya proffered two possible arguments in support of the view that the Uttarakāṇḍa was written by the original author himself: "*Firstly* the history and the greatness of Rāvaṇa required to be detailed somewhere, for without them the poem would have been incomplete and the greatness of Rāma without a strong relief; *Secondly*, the painful sequel of the recital of the poem viz., the disappearance of Sītā has so beautifully been conceived that even if the incidents were supposed to be imaginary none but the great poet himself could have

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1 Masson Oursel etc. AIC p.258
2 NW I, 3,122; BE VII, 111, 1 ff.
3 Nilakanta Sastri: JOR VI pp. 115—116
4 Sastri: *Krishnaswami Aiyangar* Commemoration Volume, 1936 pp. 321 f.
5 Kibe: *Location of Laṅkā*, Poona 1947, p.55
6 *Asu Mook, Silver Jub.* III p.395

conceived them. In fact, they strike us as a part and parcel of the grand tragedy of the epic."[1]

§ 67. The arguments of these scholars lead mainly to the two conclusions that the contents (at least, the main incidents) of the Uttarakāṇḍa are an essential part of the epic and that the tragic end, if imaginary, should have been conceived by Vālmīki himself. As regards the contents, it is quite probable that there were certain ballads, especially on Rāvaṇa, which were rejected by Vālmīki as irrelevant to his poem; there might have also been ballads on the disappearance of Sītā into the earth composed as a corollary to those about her birth from the bosom of the earth. What we actually see in the Uttarakāṇḍa is a collection of ballads, held together by a flimsy connecting story, more compatible to the Mahābhārata than the genuine Rāmāyaṇa. Sītā's end is, no doubt, replete with pathos; it is in keeping with an epic which was composed by a poet who drew his inspiration from the shrieks of a bereaved *krauñca*-bird! But the latter story in itself is late.

§ 68. We are unable to decide whether the Rāmāyaṇa was originally a heroic epic which in the course of time was recast so that its pathetic aspect was emphasized or whether the original itself sought to be primarily a lyrical and only secondarily a heroic product. The former is, however, the more probable. If the banishment of Rāma and the abduction of Sītā evoke pathos, the conquest of Laṅkā and the victory over Rāvaṇa are definitely heroic in character. A heroic epic, wherein the abduction of the heroine is the central plot, cannot have more logical an end than a happy reunion; the banishment of Sītā and her pathetic fate are a further elongation of the tale and it need not necessarily be the work of the great poet; the participation of the author as a character of this part of the story precludes any such possibility. Besides, it is unfair by other poets of India to affirm, as Vaidya does, that none but Vālmīki could have conceived it. In fact, the happy ending, provided by Bhavabhūti to his Uttararāmacarita, evinces a more refined literary taste.

§ 69. Besides the major part of the Bālakāṇḍa and the Uttarakāṇḍa, there are many chunks in the other five kāṇḍas, which bespeak a late origin. The interpolations are easily recognised although in both language and spirit they differ but little from the rest of the epic. These are, however, clumsy because they are either repetitions of ideas already expressed or are altogether irrelevant to the theme. There are also many contradictions between them and the other parts of the Rāmāyaṇa. They are not works of one particular period; the tendency to add and supplement the epics has been there from very early days to very recent times.

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1 Vaidya: RRV pp. 47—48.

Many cantos have been rejected by the Commentators themselves as *prakṣipta* (interpolated) and many more have since then been added. The reasons for such accretions are, as Vaidya suggested, "*firstly* the theory of Rāma being an Avatāra of Viṣṇu borrowed from the Mahābhārata; *secondly*, the theory that the Rāmāyaṇa was the first Sargabandha kāvya; *thirdly*, poetical embellishments or the desire to put in more descriptions of seasons, battles, cities and palaces and more lamentations, eulogies and dialogues; *fourthly*, the desire to make the Rāmāyaṇa a depository of legendary lore, *fifthly*, the desire to make it a depository of knowledge; *sixthly* and lastly the desire to exaggerate the marvellous."[1] The most apparent interpolations are the long tag-verses in metres other than the śloka, episodes such as the chasing of the golden deer,[2] the burning of Laṅkā by Hanumat, the story of the Andhamuni, the discussion on whether Vibhīṣaṇa should be killed as a spy,[3] the episode of Kumbhakarṇa and Vibhīṣaṇa (NW VI, 46, 82-91) peculiar to NW, the coronation of Vibhīṣaṇa and geographical accounts put into the mouth of Sugrīva[4] along with passages which refer to the Buddha, Yavanas, Śakas, Pahlavas, Andhras, Pauṇḍras, Colas, Pāṇḍyas, Keralas, Kāverī, Tāmraparṇi and to Kavāṭa.[5] The legends and some of the didactic and philosophical verses could have been the work of brahmanical redactors. But a real Brahmanical recasting—a sort of a "tendentiose Umarbeitung"[6]—is not as discernible as in the Mahābhārata except in the Bāla and the Uttarakāṇḍas. On the other hand, a Vaiṣṇavaite revision of at least the first, sixth and the seventh kāṇḍas may be assumed to explain the references in them to Rāma as an incarnation of Viṣṇu.

§ 70. Besides the interpolations, there are many repetitions both of verses and ideas. NW II, 15 and NW II, 16 have many verses in common, while NW III, 19, 20-22 are repeated as NW III, 19, 47-49. Recounting events has led to repetitions in ideas; Guha relates to Bharata what Rāma did and Lakṣmaṇa said while in Śṛṅgaverapura;[7] Sītā narrates to Anasūyā her life-story up to the banishment.[8] In GE III, 43 Mārīca is made to narrate some events, already described in the Bālakāṇḍa. Tārā curses Rāma for killing Vālī and says that Sītā will not stay with Rāma long and that she will return to the earth.[9] Trijaṭā refers to events, which were to follow in her description of a dream and even refers to the birth of the two children of Sītā.[10] Hanumat describes his adventures in Laṅkā to Aṅgada and others; and to Bharata he relates the life of Rāma from the time of exile to his return

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1 Vaidya: RRV pp. 49-50
2 Vaidya: RRV pp. 35 and 42
3 Grierson: IA XXIII p. 53
4 Grierson: *loc. cit.*, p. 53
5 Cf. Kamesvara Aiyar: QJMS XVI. p. 251
6 Cf. Grierson: IA XXIII p. 53
7 NW II, 98
8 NW III, 2
9 NW IV, 16, 39-40
10 NW V, 21, 9-35

to Bharadvāja's hermitage. Some of these repetitions, particularly those which refer to the events of the Bāla and the Uttarakāṇḍas are of late origin.

§ 71. As these interpolations and repetitions show, the composition of the Rāmāyaṇa cannot be ascribed to a particular individual or period. Strictly speaking, the date of every passage and every verse should be ascertained before we can finally trace the development of the epic, and utilise the material therein for the reconstruction of the social history of ancient India. The present state of our knowledge regarding the chronology of the Indian literary products makes it almost impossible for us to arrive at any conclusive scheme of chronological stratification for the material of the Rāmāyaṇa. However, we shall attempt to establish as a working hypothesis in the next section a tentative chronological order, which we shall follow in the evaluation of the social data found in the epic.

E. The Date of the Rāmāyaṇa

§ 72. Though chronology has been the stumbling block of the students of Indology in their researches, it has comparatively been of less concern to the Indians down the ages. As Albērūni had observed in 1030 the Hindus unfortunately "do not pay much attention to the historical order of things....and when they are pressed for information and are at a loss not knowing what to say, they invariably take to romancing."[1] Therefore, according to the orthodox tradition preserved among the Hindus, the Rāmāyaṇa is regarded a biography of Rāma written by Vālmīki who was the hero's contemporary in the Tretā Yuga nearly a million years ago (i.e. in 867,102 B.C.)[2]. The tradition, too, is not unanimous. The Uttarakāṇḍa of the Rāmāyaṇa assumes that Rāma belonged to the Dvāparayuga[3] and this is supported by a tradition recorded in Ceylon in a late work called the Rājāvaliya;[4] this work, which belongs to the decadent period of Sinhalese literature, cannot be as authoritative as Dalal[5] considers it to be. But it suggests an interesting date for the Rāmāyaṇa by stating that the events of the Rāmāyaṇa took place 1844 years before the Buddha entered on his mission, that is somewhere between 2432 B.C. and 2375 B.C. Modern writers of both India and the West have been guilty of following these traditions to the letter and ascribing the epic to the hoary past. Ramaswami Sastri dates it as far back as 5000 to 6000 B.C.[6] while Count Bjornstjerna is

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1 Sachau: *Alberuni's* India II p. 10
2 Ramaswami Sastri: SR p. 23. Cf. also Dharma: RP. pp. 1 ff.
3 BE VII, 74, 27
4 *Rājāvaliya* tr. by Edward Upham (London 1833) p. 191
5 Dalal: HID p. 196
6 Ramaswami Sastri: SR p. 39

said to have fixed it at 2000 B.C.[1]. And William Jones has regarded it as 2029 B.C.[2]. A. K. Mazumdar reckoned the date to be not later than 1435 B.C.[3] while Gorresio interpreted a reference to the Rāmāyaṇa in the Rājataraṅginī to signify that the date of the Rāmāyaṇa could be about the fourteenth century B.C. But it must be borne in mind that he was "far from wishing to attribute any great precision to these chronological computations."[4] While these dates are wholly unsatisfactory for scholarly purposes inasmuch as they leave wide lacunae in the literary history, which cannot be accounted for, they are also based on the assumption that Rāmāyaṇa was the work of a single author who was a contemporary of Rāma himself.

§ 73. The Rāmāyaṇa, as we have it today, has undergone a series of clearly defined stages of development. *Firstly* there were the ballads and cycles of ballads centering round Ayodhyā, Kiṣkindhā and Laṅkā. *Secondly*, they were put together by the poet Vālmīki into an epic of about 12,000 verses. *Thirdly*, the poem, which was originally divided into Adhyāyas came to be divided into six kāṇḍas and cantos, with tag-verses of variant metres. *Fourthly*, the original text developed into recensions and the interpolations such as the geographical cantos, fuller descriptions and supernatural details were included. *Finally*, the legendary portion of the Bālakāṇḍa and the whole of the Uttarakāṇḍa were added probably under Brahmanical influence and a new list of contents along with a mythical account of the origin of the epic through divine inspiration experienced by Vālmīki was included. After this stage only minor accretions, such as those rejected by commentators, were made but the form the epic attained at this stage remained, probably because it was reduced to writing at that time.

§ 74. The time taken for this process of development and the date of the Rāmāyaṇa have been reckoned by a number of scholars. Weber concluded that "the earliest indigenous testimonies to the existence of a Rāmāyaṇa date from about the third or fourth century of our era."[5]

§ 75. Jacobi argued that the Rāmāyaṇa, which does not mention Pāṭalīputra or the empire of Aśoka, which knows only of petty states engrossed in their own palace intrigues with no high statecraft and which represents the time when Ayodhyā and not Sāketa was the capital of Kosala and when Ayodhyā was abandoned and Śrāsvastī built instead, had its oldest portions composed before the 5th century and probably in the 6th or 8th century B.C.[6]. Another argument of Jacobi—which

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1 *Ibid.*, p. 24
2 Dalal: HID p. 195
3 Mazumdar: HHM p. 60
4 Dalal: HID p. 195 (quoted)
5 Weber: IA I. p. 252
6 Summarised in Grierson: IA XXIII p. 55

however is less convincing—is that the epic was composed prior to the Buddhist era because it was in Sanskrit. He assumed that Sanskrit was out of use during the subsequent era.[1]

§ 76. Monier Williams, before him, sought to establish that the earliest composition of the epic took place not later than the 5th century B.C. on the grounds that the epic was pre-Buddhistic and pre-Brahmanical, that it mentioned no cases of Satī and showed that the Deccan and the western and southern regions of India had not been occupied by the Aryans and that Dion Chrysostomos (middle of the 1st century A.D.) spoke of poems resembling the Illiad. He also dated "the first orderly compilation" to the third century B.C.[2].

§ 77. Grierson's criticism of Jacobi's date on the basis that the Rāmāyaṇa of the centuries preceding the Buddha did not resemble in form the epic as we have it today, has as its substratum the exploded theory of a Prakrit origin.[3]

§ 78. Macdonell arrived at the conclusion "that the kernel of the Rāmāyaṇa was composed before 500 B.C., while the more recent portions were probably not added till the second century B.C. and later."[4]

§ 79. C. V. Vaidya ascribed the Rāmāyaṇa to "that period of Indian History when sacrifice was the most distinguishing feature of Aryan worship, when Buddhism was unknown, when idol-worship did not exist, when Brahmins and Kṣatriyas freely ate animal food, when women learnt the Vedas and performed Vedic rites, when Kṣatriyas competed with Brahmins in learning and Brahmins competed with Kṣatriyas in archery."[5] And assuming the criticism of the Buddha as due to the reaction against Buddhism after Aśoka[6] and considering the mention made of the zodiacal signs in BE I, 18, 8-9 and a commentarial remark that *Mahārtham* meant *Mahārtham Mahābhāṣyam Patañjalikṛtam*, he fixed the date of the compilation of the present Rāmāyaṇa to the 2nd century B.C.[7].

§ 80. Berridale Keith criticises the arguments based on the grounds of Satī and astronomical references, as put forward by Jacobi,[8] and mainly on the grounds that Pāṇini does not happen to cite the name of any personage of the Rāmāyaṇa[9] and that the Kāvya literature which developed out of the style of the Rāmāyaṇa belongs to much earlier an

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1 Jacobi: DRJ pp. 116 ff. Cf. Winternitz: ILW I. p. 511
2 Monier Williams: IW pp. 316 & 319
3 Grierson: 1A XXIII p. 55
4 Macdonell: SLM p. 309. Cf. also IGI p. 237
5 Vaidya: RRV p. 9
6 Historically there is no proof of such a reaction.
7 Vaidya: RRV pp. 21-22
8 Keith: JRAS (1915) p. 322
9 *loc. cit*,. p. 320

age than the first century B.C.[1], he concludes, "On the whole, therefore, it appears to me that while the date before 500 B.C. cannot well be maintained, there is no reason to go below a date before 300 B.C. for the kernel of the Rāmāyaṇa."[2] Winternitz, too, is of the same opinion.[3]

§ 81. A novel approach to the solution of the problem had been attempted by P.C. Sen Gupta who advanced the references in the Rāmāyaṇa to *Buddha*, *Tathāgata*, *Bhikṣu*, *Śramaṇa*, *Śramaṇī* and *Caityaprāsāda* as evidence for the post-Buddhistic time and showed that Rāma is later than Buddha by about 720 years (i.e. circa 233 A.D.)[4]. On astronomical data, collected from the Rāmāyaṇa, he conjectured that the author of the Rāmāyaṇa was about 100 years earlier than Kālidāsa. He on the the same grounds concluded that the Rāmāyaṇa poet was to be dated about 438 A.D.[5].

§ 82. Kunhan Rāja, however, is not inclined to place the Rāmāyaṇa before Kālidāsa and he opines that Kālidāsa did not know the epic.[6] Besides, dates ranging from the sixth century B.C. to fourth century A. D. have been accepted by various scholars as a working basis; for example, Hopkins in his epic mythology seems to prefer the period between 400 B.C. to 400 A.D.[7]; while V.R.R. Dikshitar accepted the period from the fifth century B.C. to the second century A.D.[8]. Ananda K. Coomaraswami placed it about 300 A.D.[9]. Radhakrishnan utilises the philosophical data therein with the assumption that we could place it somewhere in the sixth century B.C., though changes were introduced till the second century A.D.[10].

§ 83. We shall now attempt to fix dates for each of the strata of the Epic Rāmāyaṇa, outlined in § 73. The first stage, when ballads and cycles of ballads were current, goes back at least to the age of the Brāhmaṇas although we cannot be perfectly sure about its exact beginning. The ballad on Daśaratha and his children might, however, be prior to the fourth century B.C., which is the traditional date for the second Buddhist Council, for by this time it is quite likely that the Canonical Jātaka verses had come into existence. The episodes in the Rāmāyaṇa which are similar to certain Jātakas also establish the same.

§ 84. The second stage, when Vālmīki composed the kernel of the epic perhaps falls somewhere before 300 B.C. Even if Vālmīki mentioned in the Taittirīya Prātiśākhya (IX, 4) as an authority on grammar is the same as our epic poet, he cannot be placed later than 300 B.C.

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1 *loc. cit.*, p. 320
2 *loc. cit.*, p. 327
3 Winternitz: ILW p. 517
4 Sen Gupta: JDL (Calcutta) XIX pp. 3-5.
5 *loc. cit.*, pp. 18-19
6 Kunhan Rāja: *Kane Festschrift* p. 361
7 Hopkins: EM p. 1
8 Dikshitar: IC I p. 579
9 Coomaraswami: *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art* (Gloucestershire 1908)p. 162
10 Radhakrishnan: IPR I p. 272

because the Prātiśākhya is older than Pāṇini, whose latest date possible is 300 B.C.[1]. Lack of references to any characters of the Rāmāyaṇa in Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī, excepting for rather doubtful allusions to Kosala and Kauśalyā in IV, 1, 15 and IV 1,171 and Kekaya, Kaikeyī and Bharata in VII,3,2, may also be regarded as proof for placing Vālmīki later than Pāṇini.

§ 85. The third stage, when the Mahākāvya technique influenced the epic, may fall within 300 B.C. and 100 A.D. The poetical ornaments and imagery of the Rāmāyaṇa are certainly earlier than those found in the Girnar inscription of Rudradāman, which is dated circa 150-52 A.D. and also those used by Aśvaghoṣa in his Buddhacarita and Saundarananda kāvya. The metres of the tag-verses, too, can be regarded as older than the ones used by Aśvaghoṣa.

§ 86. The next stage when the original Archetype was split up into various recensions and admitted interpolations evinces signs of overlapping with the previous one. Bulcke, however, thinks that the Archetype may have gradually shaded into two recensions from the first century A.D. while Walter Ruben fixed the date in the 2nd century A.D.[2]. The absence of corroborative external evidence makes it impossible to fix dates for this process with any degree of certainty. But as regards the interpolations, some of them can actually be dated; for example, the allusions to Śakas, Pahlavas, the Pāṇḍyan capital etc. belong to an age subsequent to the first century A.D. The knowledge of the geography of the world, also, shows such aspects as may not have been known before the Christian era. The didactic portions are more akin to the later Smṛti literature than to the Upaniṣads or the Buddhist literature. Moreover, the sections containing supernatural elements can be assigned to an age when the Purāṇas exercised their influence on the epics. As the Harivaṃśa of the Mahābhārata and some sections of the Bāla—and the Uttara—kāṇḍas of the Rāmāyaṇa show, it took place at a very late stage of the development of the epics. In fact, their influence marks the fifth and the last stage when legends, which are specifically Brahmanical, came to be included in the epic.

§ 87. The addition of the legends to the Bālakāṇḍa and appending Uttarakāṇḍa seem to reflect a period when sectarian influences affected the epic. The numerous references to Rāma as an incarnation of Viṣṇu in the Bāla-and the Uttara-kāṇḍas are definitely the result of a Vaiṣṇava revision. The legends about Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, Ahalyā, Viśvāmitra and Śambūka savour of Brahmanism, while such allusions as to Rāvaṇa's paying

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1 Keith: HOS Vol. XVIII pp. XXXIX —XLI.

2 Bulcke: JOR XVIII 1 p. 27

homage to the Śivaliṅga are the interpolations of the Śaivaites. Such sectarian tendencies in Indian religion are traceable towards the first centuries of the Christian era as the pillar of Heliodorus at Besnagar indicates.

§ 88. The last of the interpolations are the lists of contents and the story about the origin of the *śloka* metre. A Sanskrit inscription discovered at Trā-kien in Champā recording the dedication of an image and a temple to Vālmīki by the king Prakāśadharma (c. 653-679 A.D.) refers to this story in the verse :-

"*Yasya śokāt samutpannam*
ślokam Brahmābhipūjati"[1]

Thus the lowest limit for the latest section is placed in the seventh century A.D.

§ 89. The evidence from the Mahābhārata helps us to push back the lower limit by a few centuries. As shown by Weber, Jacobi, Winternitz and others, the Mahābhārata knows of the Rāmāyaṇa along with its late accretions[2]; Rāma is known as an incarnation of Viṣṇu and Vālmīki is quoted as an authority. Further, an epitome of the story of the Rāmāyaṇa is given in the Mahābhārata, and the researches of Sukthankar[3] reveal that this episode, called the Rāmopākhyāna, is actually a summary of the Rāmāyaṇa as we have it. As Winternitz has stated, these facts along with many others prove that "the period of growth of the Rāmāyaṇa falls within the longer period of the development of the Mahābhārata."[4] Now, the Mahābhārata, with all its interpolations counting on the whole a hundred thousand stanzas, is known to the Khoh copper-plate inscription of Sarvanātha, which can be dated circa 533 A.D.[5]. Thus the Rāmāyaṇa is to be dated at least a century before the completion of the Mahābhārata. Another important piece of evidence for the existence of the Rāmāyaṇa before the fourth century A.D. is that Kālidāsa apparently utilised the material from the epic including the Uttarakāṇḍa in his Raghuvaṃśa. Moreover, the contents of the Uttarakāṇḍa were already known to Vimala Sūri, the author of the Paumacariya, who is stated to have composed the epic 530 years after the Nirvāṇa of Mahāvīra,[6] i. e. middle of the 1st century A.D. Hence it is clear that we are in a position to go back further and fix the date for the later portions of the Rāmāyaṇa somewhere before the 2nd century A.D.

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1 Nilakanta Sastri: JOR VI p.117.
2 Weber: IA I pp. 240—244.
3 Sukthankar: CSM pp. 387—402.
4 Winternitz: ILW I p 505.
5 Fleet: *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* III (No. 31) p. 137.
6 Winternitz: ILW II pp 489—494.

§ 90. Our analysis, therefore reveals the following facts :- (1) The material of the Rāmāyaṇa dates at least from the fourth century B.C. while the Archetype was composed somewhere before 300 B.C. (2) The third and the fourth stages of the development of the epic fall within 300 B.C. and 100 A.D. (3) The Uttarakāṇḍa was in existence by the middle of the first century A.D., and (4) the latest additions as regards Vālmīki and the śloka metre came into existence roundabout the 2nd century A.D. As such we are justified in assuming that the data we derive from the Rāmāyaṇa reflect the social conditions of India between the fourth century B.C. and 2nd century A.D.

F. Historicity of the Rāmāyaṇa

§ 91. The Rāmāyaṇa, though in its later parts, professes to be the biography of an actual king, Rāma, composed by his contemporary Vālmīki. As such it is a history or an *Itihāsa*, whose veracity is not to be doubted. This view has been upheld by many Indian writers, among whom P. C. Dharma uses its data as representing the polity, followed at the time of Rāma. She, further, places Rāma's reign in the eighth or sixth century B.C.[1]. If we, too, accept the tradition, current in India, the question of the historicity of the Rāmāyaṇa becomes very simple : the Rāmāyaṇa has then to be considered a faithful record of the history of India at the time of Rāma, which of course falls in the hoary past between the Tretā and the Dvāparayuga. But it is futile, as it has been shown earlier (I § 72), to lay too much stress on these traditions because they are to a great extent prompted by religious, if not national, enthusiasm to ascribe a great antiquity to national treasures. Paying due attention to the fact that the Rāmāyaṇa, as we have it today, consists of both earlier and later materials whose dates of composition range from the fourth century B.C. to the second century A.D., we should exercise the greatest caution in employing its material for the reconstruction of the history of India.

§ 92. The traditional sources, especially the Purāṇas, contain data which if tackled properly throw abundant light on the political history of ancient India. As Pargiter states, "the ancient Kṣatriya literature deserves to be examined from a commonsense point of view on the supposition that it may contain genuine tradition, however, much distorted in the course of time."[2] The tradition, thus preserved, is unanimous in declaring the hero of the Rāmāyaṇa and his family, the Ikṣvāku, to be historical. The epic gives in two places the genealogy of the Ikṣvākus, a scion of the Solar dynasty, and in mentioning the

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1 Dharma: RP p. 1. 2 Pargiter: JRAS (1910) p. 1.

prominent rulers of the line agrees with the Purāṇas. But the historical veracity of these genealogies is open to suspicion because of the disagreement *firstly* between the two lists of the Rāmāyaṇa and *secondly* between them and the lists given in other sources. The main differences between the two lists, included in the Rāmāyaṇa, are that the genealogy occurring in NW II. 123, 6-30 mentions three extra kings such as Vikukṣi between Kukṣi and Bāṇa, Khadjī between Raghu and Sudarśana, and Prasustaka between Manu and Ambarīṣa, while the list in NW I, 66, 16-30 has the extra names Purusādaka, Kalmāṣapāda and Sṛkkala between Raghu and Sudarśana, Suśruta between Manu and Ambarīṣa and Nābhāga between Yayāti and Aja. The genealogies of the Rāmāyaṇa comprising 33 and 35 members respectively, are much shorter than those given in the Purāṇas, which mention no less than 63 members up to Rāma. In the arrangement, which implies also the mutual relationship of the members of the line, the Rāmāyaṇa differs from other sources which, however, are unanimous.[1] The same does not apply to the two other genealogies of the Rāmāyaṇa to wit, the Videha line (NW I, 67, 2-13) and the Ikṣvāku line of Vaiśālī (NW I, 43, 13-20). The genealogy of the Videhas agrees with the Purāṇic lists in both the number and the order of its members, the only differences being that the Rāmāyaṇa splits Mithi-Janaka into Mithi and Janaka and has Bṛhadratha, Prasiddhaka, Andhaka and Kṛtiroma in place of Bṛhaduktha, Pratīndhaka, Mahādhṛti and Mahāroman respectively. Variations in the Ikṣvāku line of Vaiśālī are that the Purāṇas name the two kings Kṛtāśra and Sumati as Kṛtāśva and Pramati.

§ 93. The genealogies present a very interesting problem, which somehow does not seem to have occurred to Pargiter. The incompatibility of the genealogical lists of the Ikṣvākus given in the Rāmāyaṇa with those given in the Purāṇas was accounted for by Pargiter as due to the intervention of brahmans. "This is not surprising", he says, "because the Rāmāyaṇa is a brahmanical poem and the brahmans notoriously lacked the historical sense."[2] If the composers of these genealogies of the Rāmāyaṇa were brahmans, who lacked the historical sense, how is it possible that they agree with the so-called Kṣatriya sources (i. e. Purāṇas) in two lists while they differ only in one ? The explanation, which appears most plausible is that the complication was caused by the Ikṣvāku line itself. There had been in all probability a number of dynasties in India which traced their inception to Ikṣvāku. These lines might or might not have been connected with the central line of the Ikṣvākus, but they seem to have, somehow, associated themselves with the prominent members of the main line. It is only in this manner

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1 See Pargiter: JRAS (1910) pp. 17-18. 2 Pargiter: AIHT p. 93

that we can explain the descent of Mandhātṛ (Pāli Mandhāta) from Mahāsammata-Roja-Vararoja-Kalyāṇa-Varakalyāṇa as given in the Pāli Commentaries[1] and from Mahāsammata-Kalyāṇa-Rāva-Uposadha as stated in Mahāvastu.[2] Genealogical lists of varying length and differing nomenclature but all professing to be of the Ikṣvākus (Pāli Okkāka) are found in both Brahmanical and Buddhist literature. These may perhaps prove that the Ikṣvākus were a wide-spread family of rulers, whose genealogical lists could not in anyway be uniform. If so we cannot be so firm in discrediting the historicity of the lists in the Rāmāyaṇa.

§ 94. Further, we observe that the genealogical tables of the Purāṇas for the later period have been found faulty many a time mainly on the grounds that they name as successors kings, who according to epigraphical and other data have in reality been contemporaries. As such we are compelled to postpone our accepting one list in preference to another till such time as we find more reliable evidence. The agreement with other literary sourecs, especially when they represent fundamentally the same genre, cannot be regarded as sufficiently reliable evidence for the accuracy of any list.

§ 95. As far as the Rāmāyaṇa is concerned, it suffices us to conclude that Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, was a king of Ayodhyā and that his father's contemporaries were (Sīradhvaja) Janaka of Videha (father of Sītā), Lomapāda (or Romapāda) of Aṅga and Sumati (=Pramati) of Vaiśālī.[3] Daśaratha had entered into a matrimonial alliance with Aśvapati, the king of Kekaya, while Rāma married from the family of Janaka. It is also very probable that a palace intrigue, nursed by Kaikeyī compelled Daśaratha to banish his eldest son to the forest, whether it was originally to the Himālayas or to the Daṇḍakāraṇya. Moreover, it is likely that Vālmīki, who composed the kernel of the epic — although not the epic as it is — was a contemporary of Rāma. But we are unable to accept with the same degree of certainty the historicity of Rāma's adventures in the Deccan with Rākṣasas, of the abduction of Sītā by Rāvaṇa, of Rāma's alliance with the Vānaras or of his victory over the Rākṣasas.

§ 96. The orthodox tradition of India, again, does not reject them. In fact an Indian astrologer is said to have calculated the date of Rāma's fight with Rāvaṇa as 12,567,101 B.C.[4]. A tradition, recorded in Rājāvaliya, a late book of Ceylon, likewise regards the fight of Rāma and Rāvaṇa as a reality and dates it 1844 years before the Buddha;

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1 Sumaṅgala Vilāsini (P.T.S. Edition) I p. 258; Cf. Malalasekera: DPPN (s.v. Okkāka.)

2 Mahāvastu edited by E. Senart, Paris (1882) I, p. 348.

3 Cf. Pargiter: JRAS (1910) p. 46.

4 Vaidya: RRV p. 200.

and it further refers to a spell of sea–erosion, which destroyed the fortress of Rāvaṇa in Ceylon.[1] These cannot be taken seriously in our investigations although we should attempt to trace whatever historical facts are gleanable from them. At the very outset we may surmise that these incidents bespeak a familiarity with some sort of colonization movement into South India.

§ 97. As long as we accept the political data (i. e. the names of kings etc.) of the Rāmāyaṇa as reliable, we must attempt to fix the dates for at least the main characters of the story. Following the Purāṇic tradition, which places Rāma thirty generations and Sīradhvaja Janaka thirty-two generations before the battle of the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas, Pargiter has worked out that Rāma could belong to the middle of the fifth century before that battle[2] which is generally dated as circa 1000 B.C.[3]. Thus Rāma belongs to the 15th century B.C. Pusalkar, on the other hand, places him within 2350 and 1950 B.C., which he calls the Rāmacandra Period in the Indian historical tradition.[4] These dates, undoubtedly take him back to an age for which we have plenty of data from the Vedic literature. But as we have observed (I §§ 13 ff) the Vedic literature is silent on Rāma and his activities. If we were to consider the Vedic literature as representing a tradition valid for the whole of northern India — which, of course, is open to great controversy as a result of the recent theories of a pre-Aryan Eastern culture — the state of affairs in India at this time seems to preclude any possibility of having such well-established royal families with long genealogies in the eastern region of India. However, the later Vedic literature contains some relevant data whose examination should help us to fix the date of Rāma with greater accuracy.

§ 98. The origin of the dynasty of Videhas, who ruled in Mithilā is dealt with in Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 1, 4, 1 etc. A king by the name of Janaka of this line is mentioned in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad as patronizing the philosophical discussions in which Yājñavalkya took a prominent part. It also mentions Aśvapati as the king of the Kekayas. The Upaniṣad, thus, upholds the contemporaneity of two kings who are regarded so in the Rāmāyaṇa. Further, the brahmanical teachers and priests such as Vasiṣṭha, Viśvāmitra, Vāmadeva, Bharadvāja, Jābāla etc., appear as contemporaries of Rāma in the Rāmāyaṇa just as they are of Janaka in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. The name of Yājñavalkya, however, is apparently not found in the Rāmāyaṇa. Yet we cannot be altogether wrong in assuming, as Bhavabhūti had done in his Mahāvīra-

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1 *Rājāvaliya*. tr. by Edward Upham (London, 1833) p. 191.
2 Pargiter: JRAS (1910) p. 55.
3 Pargiter: JRAS p. 56. Cf. Siddhānta: HAI p. 37 (950 B.C.); Pradhan: *Chronology of Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1927. p. 269 (circa 1150 B.C.).
4 Majumdar & Pusalkar: *The Vedic Age* pp. 288—293.

carita I, 14, that Janaka of the Rāmāyaṇa is the same as Janaka of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. As one of the oldest of the Upaniṣads this cannot be dated later than the sixth century B.C. though it cannot be earlier than the eight century. Accordingly we may place Rāma in the eighth or the seventh century B.C.

§ 99. Although the political data of the Rāmāyaṇa apply to this period, we are not permitted to use the data on social conditions also as depicting the same period because the Rāmāyaṇa, even though its kernel was composed during this time, is, as we have it today, a production which dates at least two centuries later. The Archetype itself had been modified by this time and the growth of the Rāmāyaṇa from its original form to the present was probably spread between 400 B.C. and 200 A.D. As we would regard every statement contained in the epic as depicting the social conditions of the time at which it was composed and not the time it is supposed to represent, we expect to find in the data of the Rāmāyaṇa a representation of the society of ancient India during this period.

G. Other sources for the social conditions of India during the period reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa data

§ 100. The sources for the reconstruction of the social conditions of India can be divided into four groups viz. archaeological, epigraphical, numismatic and literary. The monuments, which belong to the period of composition of the Rāmāyaṇa (i. e. 400 B.C. — 200 A.D.) are mainly Buddhistic. The pillars and the stūpas of Aśoka reflect a highly developed aesthetic taste among the Indians as far back as the 3rd century B.C. while the sculpture at Bhārhut, Buddha Gayā, Sānchi, Mathurā, Amarāvatī and Nāgarjuna Koṇḍa throws some light on the social and religious conditions because the bas-reliefs depict certain aspects of the life of the people at the time. Archaeology in India, however, has not yet come to a stage when it could contribute substantially to the solution of the social problems of such periods as the one reflected in the Rāmāyaṇa. Moreover, the numerous invaders have left few of the ancient monuments intact, for they either destroyed them ruthlessly altogether or rebuilt them with such modifications as suited them.

§ 101. The epigraphical records, for this period, are of greater importance. The edicts of Aśoka throw a flood of light on the religious, political and social conditions of India under the Mauryan emperors. Other important inscriptions[1] of the period are :-

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1 The numbers indicating pages in the list refer to Dinesh Chandra Sircar: *Select Inscriptions bearing on Indian History and Civilization*. Volume I. Calcutta (1942).

1. Besnagar Garuḍa Pillar Inscription of the time of Bhāgabhadra (p. 90) c. 2nd century B.C.
2. Ghoṣūṇḍi Stone Inscription of Sarvatāta (p. 91) c. 2nd century B.C.
3. Ayodhyā Inscription of Dhanadeva (p. 96) c. 1st century A.D.
4. Mɛthurā Lion-Capital Inscription of the time of Rañjuvulu (c. 1-15 A.D.) and Soḍāsa (c. 10-25 A.D.) (p. 112).
5. Sārnāth Buddhist Image Inscription of Kaṇiṣka I (p. 132) c. 1st century A.D.
6. Mathurā Stone Inscription of Huviṣka I (p. 146) c. 2nd century A.D.

7-8. two Nāsik Cave Inscriptions of Nahapāna (p. 157 and p. 160) c. 119-124 A.D.

9. Junāgarh Rock Inscription of Rudradāman I. (p.169) c.150 A.D.
10. Nānāghat Cave Inscription of Nāganikā (p. 186) c. 1st century B.C.
11. Nāsik Cave Inscription of Vāsiṣṭhīputra Pulumāvi (p. 196) c. 149 A.D.
12. Hāthigumphā Cave Inscription of Khāravela (p. 206) c. 1st century B.C.

§ 102. Numismatic data for this period are very useful especially in studying the economic conditions. Coins of some form had existed in India even prior to the Greek invasions for the earliest literary reference to Indian coinage is a statement of Quintus Curtius, *Vit. Alex.* VIII, 12, 42, that Omphis, king of Taxila, presented eighty talents of coined silver to Alexander the Great. This has generally been taken as evidence of the existence of coinage in India about 325 B.C.[1] Rapson[2] observed that the art of striking from a die would seem to have been known in Taxila at an earlier period than elsewhere in India. As belonging most likely to the third century B.C. are regarded the coins of Mathurā, bearing the legend *Upātikyā* in Brāhmī script and those of Tripura. Coins of the following century have been discovered among the cast pieces and the square inscribed pieces of Ayodhyā while the cions of Balabhūti and those of Ujjain bearing the inscription *Ujeniya* also probably belong to the second century B.C. The subsequent period saw coins of more artistic designs, introduced to India by foreign invaders and imitated

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1 J. Allan: *Catalogue of the coins of Ancient India, London* (1936) p.XIV.

2 E. J. Rapson: *Indian Coins* (Grundriss Series), Strassburg (1897) p. 14. Cf. pp. 10—15.

by local rulers. Coins which may be regarded as belonging to the first century B.C. have been found among those of Audumbaras and their contemporaries Kuṇindas, who used legends of both Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī scripts. The vast number of coins of Śakas, Pahlavas, Andhras and Kushans belonging to this and the following centuries makes it abundantly clear that a monetary system comprising coined money was widely prevalent in India during the period under review.

§ 103. The literary sources for the period 400 B.C. — 200 A.D. may be divided into four main groups, to wit, Brahmanical, Buddhist, Jain and secular. There is no doubt whatsoever that the Vedic literature consisting of the Saṃhitās, including the Atharvaveda, the Brāhmaṇas, the Āraṇyakas and the more important Upaniṣads was in existence by 400 B.C. Only the later theistic Upaniṣads, which reveal strong sectarian influences, were composed during the period under review. The Brahmanical works, which offer invaluable data for social conditions of Ancient India, are the Sūtra-manuals, belonging to the six Vedāṅgas. The Kalpa-sūtras divided mainly into Śrauta and Gṛhya Sūtras are indeed the most significant; while the Śrautasūtras deal with the Śrauta-sacrifices which have been already elaborated in the Brāhmaṇas, the Gṛhyasūtras, which confine themselves to domestic ceremonies and sacrifices, throw a flood of light on the ideal (if not the actual) way of life, which the twice-born were enjoined to follow. They are, as Winternitz remarks, "in truth a real treasure for the ethnologist."[1] The Dharma-sūtras, which are directly connected with the Gṛhyasūtras, are equally important in so far as they supplement the material already contained in the latter, in addition to dealing with the secular law of the time. The other sūtra-manuals which belong to what Winternitz terms "the exegetic Vedāṅgas" provide comparatively little data. The Dharma-śāstras, which developed as a result of elaborating the Dharmasūtras, too, belong to this period. Some of the oldest among them like the Bauddhāyana Dharmaśāstra and the Āpastambīya Dharmasūtra may, however, not be dated later than the third or the second century B.C.[2]. The Mānava Dharmaśāstra or the Manusmṛti, which is the commonest of the Dharmaśāstras, apparently developed between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D.[3].

§ 104. Among the Buddhist literary sources the Tipiṭaka — the Pāli Canon — occupies the most important position. The Canon, as we have it, is essentially a growth of a number of centuries based on a nucleus, in the form of the authentic words of the Buddha who belonged to the sixth and the fifth century B.C. There is little doubt, however,

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1 Winternitz: ILW I p. 274.
2 Keith: HSL p. 438.
3 Keith: *loc. cit.*, p. 441.

that the major portion of the Canon, comprising the Sutta and the Vinaya Piṭakas existed at the time of the first and the second Councils (i.e. 5th century and 4th century B.C.) and its arrangement into Piṭakas and Nikāyas along with the composition of the major part of the Abhidhamma-Piṭaka, which was the result of scholastic activity of the early disciples, was completed by the time of the third Council, held in Pāṭalīputra, 236 years after the Buddha under the patronage of Aśoka. The last portion which is known to be added is the Kathāvatthu composed by Moggalīputta Tissa. Thus the Canon, which in its earliest sections (i. e. the Vinaya and the Nikāyas) depicts the conditions of the sixth, fifth and fourth centuries B.C., can be regarded on the whole as reflecting a period which is not later than 200 B.C.[1]. Besides the Canon, there are the Aṭṭhakathās or commentaries and other non-Canonical works, which according to tradition were composed during the period under discussion. However, the Aṭṭhakathās, whose translation into old Sinhalese is attributed to Mahinda, are available to us only in the form they acquired in the fifth century A.D. The tradition contained therein represents undoubtedly an earlier period. Considering that the intermission of the texts in the Buddhist Order had been more reliable as they resorted to writing at the comparatively early date of the first century B.C., we can quite safely accept the material in the Aṭṭhakathās as reflecting at least the latter part of the period under review. As such the Jātaka-Aṭṭhakathā, which is by far the most valuable source of the social conditions of Ancient India can be regarded as authoritative for at least the first century B.C. Further, it is worth noting that Richard Fick in his study of the social organisation in North-east India assumed on the evidence of the Bhārhut, Sānchi and Amarāvatī sculptures the lower limit of the Jātaka age to be the third century B.C.[2]. The antiquity of such non-Canonical works as Milindapañhā cannot be proved because the later accretions have altogether effaced the original form; the original of this particular work had been much shorter as the Chinese translations show.[3]

§ 105. The literary sources of the Jains present greater chronological difficulties. Their tradition is admittedly one of numerous breaches caused mainly by famines; some texts have been altogether lost and as a result of the Councils which were called for the purpose of deciding the texts three versions (*vācanā*) associated with Pāṭalīputra, Mathurā and Valabhī had come into being by the sixth century A.D., when the Canon was reduced to writing by Devardhigaṇi Kṣamāśramaṇa who

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1 For a discussion of the antiquity of the Tipiṭaka data see Wijesekera: IHQ XVII pp. 204—205.

2 Fick: *The Social Organisation of North-east India in Buddha's time.* Calcutta (1920) p. X.

3 Geiger: *Pāli Literature and Language*, Calcutta (1943) p. 27.

followed mainly the Mathurā version. The problem of the date of the Jain Canonical works may be summed up in the words of Jagadish Chandra Jain: "The Canonical works of the Jains have not originated in one period; their traditions can be traced back to Mahāvīra and his disciples, or to say more correctly to the period of Candragupta when tradition places the Council of Pāṭalīputra. But afterwards the sacred books of the Jains had to undergo considerable changes, and as a result several works or portions of works were added to them from time to time. Finally the Canons were written down by Devardhigaṇi in the sixth century A.D. which must be taken as the latest date of the *Siddhānta*."[1] The oldest sections of the Jain Canon as proved by linguistic and literary evidence are the Ācārāṅga, the Sūtrakṛtāṅga and the Uttarādhyāyana. The Chedasūtras, which prescribe rules of discipline for the monks and nuns, at least in its nucleus (i.e. Sūtras 3-5) are one of the earliest portions of the Canon, although, as Winternitz[2] conjectures, they did not form a group in the Canon until a late period, as it is always not the same texts which are placed in this group. While on sociological grounds we can regard the Bṛhatkalpasūtra to represent a very early section of the Canon, the historicity of the list of teachers (*Therāvalī*) given in Bhadrabāhū's Kalpasūtra is attested by the inscriptions of the first century A.D.[3]. We are justified in reckoning these texts as supplementing the data of the Rāmāyaṇa for the social conditions of the period 400 B.C. to 200 A.D.

§ 106. The secular literary sources include mainly the epics and grammatical and scientific works. The grammarians Pāṇini, Kātyāyana and Patañjali belong to this period; Pāṇini in all probability is earlier than 300 B.C., while Patañjali, who was probably a contemporary of Puṣyamitra Suṅga belongs to the middle of the 2nd century B.C. and Kātyāyana comes after Pāṇini but before Patañjali. The citations in their grammatical treatises occasionally shed light on historical and social problems of the times and hence they, too, may be regarded as supplementary data for the period under review. The most important of the scientific treatises of Ancient India, which reflect her social conditions is the Arthaśāstra, which traditionally is ascribed to Kauṭilya or Viṣṇugupta or Cānakya, the Chief Minister of Candragupta Maurya. It is, however, impossible to assign it, as it exists today, to the fourth century B.C.; nor is it justifiable to bring it far down to the 3rd century A.D. as Jolly has attempted to do. E. Johnston has shown that the evidence of Aśvaghoṣa, the Jātakamālā and the Laṅkāvatārasūtra may be utilised to establish the lower limit for the com-

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1 Jain: LIJC p. 38; for a detailed discussion of the antiquity of the Canon see *ibid* pp. 31—38.

2 Winternitz: ILW II. pp 461 ff.

3 Winternitz: *loc, cit.*, p. 463.

position of the Arthaśāstra "certainly not later than about 250 A.D."[1] Atindranath Bose has attempted to place it in the first century A.D.[2]. This is only the lower limit that can be assigned to this work. In the present state of our knowledge it is advisable that we regard the Arthaśāstra to be a work assignable to the period, third century B.C. to 100 as Raychaudhuri has done.[3]

§ 107. Equally important are the writings of Megasthenes who was the envoy of Seleukos to the court of Chandragupta Maurya. His work has been lost and is available to us only in fragments which were quoted by later classical writers such as Strabo, Arrian, and Diodorus. Although much weight cannot be laid on the fantastic views he had recorded as regards matters which he did not directly come across, he is no doubt a careful recorder of things with which he was really familiar in India. As such his accounts of the city of Pāṭalīputra and the administrative organization thereof are worthy of note. Vātsyāyana's Kāmasūtra would have been another useful source of information. But unfortunately we are precluded from using its data for this period as its date is uncertain and all that we could decide is that it preceded Kālidāsa.

§ 108. By far the most abundant source is the other epic of India, the Mahābhārata. It is a considerably larger work and covers in its development a wider period. While the Rāmāyaṇa does not show any familiarity with the Mahābhārata, the later parts of the latter not only give a summary of the story but also refer to it and its author, Vālmīki. The two epics show their contemporaneity in such factors as language, metre and proverbs; the most probable interrelation between them as regards chronology is that the Rāmāyaṇa, being much shorter an epic required a shorter period of development than the Mahābhārata. As such the Mahābhārata contains material which is both earlier and later than the Rāmāyaṇa. Yet the bulk of the material falls within the period of composition of the Rāmāyaṇa (i.e. 400 B.C. to 200 A.D.). Finally, we shall take into consideration the data supplied by the epics of Aśvaghoṣa, namely, the Buddhacarita and the Saundarananda, because these represent the lower limit for the Rāmāyaṇa, and, thus we shall be in a position to check the antiquity of the Rāmāyaṇa data with reference to them.

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1 E. H. Johnston: JRAS (1929) p. 89
2 Bose: SREI pp. 494 ff.
3 Raychaudhuri: *Political History of Ancient India*, Calcutta (1938) p. 8,

CHAPTER II

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

A. The Geographical Background of the Rāmāyaṇa Story

§ 1. The Rāmāyaṇa recounts the life of king Rāma of the dynasty of Ikṣvākus, who ruled over Kosala, the great state (janapada) pleasant and prosperous, replete with cattle and corn, situated on the bank of Sarayū.[1] Daśaratha was the lord of the Kosalas and his son Rāma was called also *Kosaleśvara*.[2] His mother, too, perhaps was from Kosala as her name Kausalyā seems to suggest. The capital of Kosala at the time of Daśaratha and Rāma was Ayodhyā which was situated on the bank of the river Sarayū and was known also as *Kośala-pura*[3]. Sarayū appears to have been a very important feature of the geography of Ayodhyā and its banks had served the Ikṣvāku rulers as their hunting ground.[4] These places are easily identified. Kosala was one of the sixteen *mahājanapadas*, mentioned in the Buddhist and the Jain texts;[5] at the time of the Buddha it was a very important political power, being one of the four monarchies, and was ruled over by the king Pasenadī (Prasenajit) Kosala.

§ 2. *Sarayū* is the modern Sarju or Gogra; it was apparently called "the illustrious great river" (*śrīmatī mahānadī*).[6] *Ayodhyā* is identified with modern udh, near Fysabad. By the 6th century B.C. the capital of Kosala was no longer Ayodhyā. It was *Śrāvastī* Pāli Sāvatthi). The shifting of the Kosalan capital from Ayodhyā to Śrāvastī is familiar to the last kāṇḍa of the Rāmāyaṇa, wherein it is mentioned that at the death of Rāma, Ayodhyā was abandoned and Lava ruled from Śrāvastī.[7] Ayodhyā was familiar to the Buddhist writers as the seat of the Ikṣvāku power but references to it are frequently made by them as well as the Jains in its later name Śāketa.[8] *Śāketa* was visited by both Mahāvīra and the Buddha and according to the Mahāparinibbāṇa Sutta[9] it, along with Sāvatthi, falls within the category of six "*mahānagaras*", mentioned by Ānanda, while according to the

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1 NW I, 5, 1
2 NW II, 108, 1
3 NW II, 19, 40
4 NW II, 69, 17
5 Jain: LIJC p. 252
6 Cf. Pargiter: JRAS (1894) p. 236 on identification of Śrīmatī Mahānadī with Sarayū.
7 BE VII, 108, 5
8 Cf. Rhys Davids: *Buddhist India*, pp. 28 f.
9 Dīgha Nikāya (P.T.S.) II p. 146

Jain Canon it is one of the ten capital cities of India.[1] The relative position of Śāketa and Śrāvastī in the kingdom of Kosala during the age of the Buddha is a problem, whose solution is somewhat facilitated by the geographical accounts of the Buddhist and the Jain Canons. According to the Jain records Śāketa (Ardhamāgadhī: *Sāgeya*= Ayodhyā) was the capital of Kosala while Śrāvastī (Ardhamāgadhī: *Sāvatthī*) was the capital of *Kuṇāla*, which is identified with the region between the rivers Aciravatī and Gandhak.[2] Śrāvastī as stated in the Mahāvagga[3] was situated on Acirāvati, six leagues to the north of Śāketa. The Jain accounts, though they are later than the Buddhist texts, seem to represent an older tradition pertaining to a time when the Kosala kingdom was confined to the region west of Sarayū while its western bank was a kingdom by itself under the appellation of Kuṇāla. The two cities, if so, might have come into prominence as the capitals of the two kingdoms and when at a time prior to the age of the Buddha Kosala extended its power over Kuṇāla, Śrāvastī rose in importance and became the seat of government of Kosala although Śāketa did not lose its glory altogether.

§ 3. Daśaratha is said to nave ruled over a kingdom which extended far beyond Kosala. In one recension he calls himself the king of kings of the world (*Pṛthivyāṃ rājarājo'smi*) and the emperor over all rulers of the earth (*Samrāṭ sarvamahīkṣitām*)[4]. In the other two recensions his empire is delineated though somewhat differently. In NW it comprises Prācya, Sindhu, Sauvīra, Surasāvarta, Vaṅga, Aṅga, Magadha, Kāśī and Kosala,[5] while the BE includes Drāviḍas, Sindhu, Sauvīra, Saurāṣṭra, Dakṣiṇāpatha, Vaṅga, Aṅga, Magadha, Matsya, Kāśī and Kosala.[6] The variations make it clear that there was no uniform tradition pertaining to the empire of Daśaratha. These lists which are definitely late interpolations seem to refer to an empire of almost the same magnitude as the Mauryan empire under Aśoka. The inclusion of such fabulous lists may be explained in two ways. *Firstly*, they may be based on the memory of the great Aśokan empire, which remained unrivalled by all Indian empires of the subsequent period. *Secondly*, they may represent an effort to conform to the traditional ideal of the "*samrāṭ*." While the Bengali Recension declared that Daśaratha was the "samrāṭ" over the whole earth the other two appear to have made this claim seem more realistic by enumerating the countries of a wide region. Whether the concept of "Samrāṭ" in itself is to be traced to wide empires of the Pre-Mauryan era—of which we have no

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1 Jain: LIJC p. 252
2 Jain: LIJC p. 256
3 Mahāvagga: (SBE) VII, 1, 1. Cf. Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 174
4 GE II, 9, 13
5 NW II, 13, 15
6 BE II, 10, 37

clear records—is still to be investigated. However, the latter explanation of these lists appears more probable. They merely emphasize the imperial power of the hero.

§ 4. Furthermore, the other geographical data show that the state of Northern India depicted in the Rāmāyaṇa is essentially pre-Mauryan; there were numerous petty states, governed by kings and chieftains who enjoyed an appreciable degree of autonomy and maintained matrimonial alliances with the neighbouring powers. Daśaratha invited for his Aśvamedha sacrifice the kings of Mithilā, Kāśī, Kekaya and Aṅga in addition to the rulers of Prācya, Sindhu, Sauvīra, Surāṣṭra and Dakṣiṇātya;[1] an interpolated verse of GE enumerates among the guests invited for Rāma's consecration kings of Prācya, Udīcya, Pratīcya, Dakṣiṇātya, besides the Mlecchas, Yavanas and Śakas.[2] Daśaratha was the son-in-law of the king of Kekaya; Rāma married Sītā, the daughter of Janaka, the king of Mithilā. With Lomapāda of Aṅga a greater friendship seems to have existed for Daśaratha is said to have given him his daughter, Śāntā, to be adopted by him.

§ 5. Mithilā was the capital of Videha, which occupied the stretch of land between the rivers Gandhak and Kosi; Cunningham has identified Mithilā with Janakapura, a small town within the Nepal border, north of which the Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga districts meet.[3] Videha, though mentioned in the Jain list of twenty-five and a half Aryan countries[4] and among the seven cities ascribed to Govinda in the Dīgha Nikāya,[5] is absent in the accounts of the sixteen Janapadas of both the Buddhists and the Jains. Its place is taken by *Vajji* (Vṛji), which confederacy had overthrown the Videhan monarchy prior to the age of the Buddha. Kāśī was one of the Janapadas and comprised the area around Benares. Kekaya, which was to the west of Vipāśā (Bēas) stretching up to Gandhāra, had as its capital Girivraja or Rājagṛha, which has been identified by Cunningham with Jalalpur.[6] Aṅga, which again was one of the sixteen Janapadas, was located in East Bihar and its capital Campā (situated near modern Bhagalpur) was regarded as one of the six mahānagaras by Ānanda[7] and one of the ten capitals by Jains. Prācya, Udīcya, Pratīcya, and Dakṣiṇātya refer to the broad divisions of India into the eastern, northern, western and southern regions. Prācya, which is undoubtedly the same as Prasii of the Greek

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1 NW I, 9, 78-84
2 GE II, 2, 11
3 Cunningham: *Ancient Geography of India*, ed. by S.M.Sastri, Calcutta 1924, p. 718
4 Jain: LIJC p. 250. This strange expression is used in the Jain Canon to signify that out of the 26 countries where Jainism was accepted, a half of Kekayiddha remained immune to Jain influence. As such only $25\frac{1}{2}$ countries could be reckoned as Aryan.
5 Dīgha Nikāya (P.T.S.) II p. 235
6 Cunningham: *op. cit.*, p. 188
7 Dīgha Nikāya (P.T.S.) II p. 146

writers, probably included at the time of Alexander the country east of Hyphasis (Bēas). Sindhu-Sauvīra and Surāṣṭra are identified with the lower valley of the Indus and Kathiawar.

§ 6. A clearer idea of the knowledge of the geography of India, reflected in the Rāmāyaṇa, may be formed by examining the routes taken by the characters of the story in their various itineraries. In the first six kāṇḍas of the epic are mentioned five such journeys, namely:

(a) the journey of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa from Ayodhyā to Mithilā in the company of Viśvāmitra.
(d) that of the messengers from Ayodhyā to Girivraja.
(c) the trip of Bharata from Girivraja to Ayodhyā.
(d) the wanderings of Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa in exile from Ayodhyā to Laṅkā.
(e) the return-journey by air of Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa from Laṅkā to Ayodhyā.

§ 7. The route taken by Viśvāmitra from Ayodhyā to Mithilā was not direct because he first brought Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to his hermitage, called the Siddhāśrama where they were to kill the demons who interrupted the sacrificial rites. The hermitage was situated between Gaṅgā and Śoṇa, about a day's journey from their confluence. The walk from Ayodhyā to this hermitage took four days and in the course of it they walked along Sarayū[1] and crossed Gaṅgā at a point not far from Sarayū;[2] thereupon their route lay through the two provinces (*janapadas*) called Mālavā[3] and Karuṣā, which, though once prosperous, were by this time depopulated as a result of the ravages of Tāḍakā.[4] Das agrees with Griffith in regarding Mālavā (*Malaja*) and Karuṣā as "probably non-Aryan words, signifying hilly or wild country."[5] It is quite likely identical with the kingdom of Malaya which is mentioned among the 25½ Aryan countries as well as among the 16 Janapadas in the Jain Canon and which is said to have been situated "in the south of Patna and south-west of Gaya in Bihar."[6] It is, however, not referred to in the lists of Janapadas in the Buddhist Canon. Karuṣā according to Nundo Lal Dey is a portion of the district of Shahabad in Bihar.[7]

§ 8. The route from Siddhāśrama to Mithilā lay along Śoṇa, across which the party waded; three yojanas from that point they crossed

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1 NW I, 20, 21
2 *Sarayvā avidūrataḥ* NW I, 21, 5
3 *Malaja* according to Das: AGA p. 10 & GE and *Maladā* in BE
4 NW I, 22, 16 ff.
5 Das: AGA p. 10
6 Jain: LIJC p. 310
7 Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 95

Jāhnavī (=Gaṅgā).[1] Thenceforth they passed through Vaiśālī[2] which was ruled over by Sumati, and the deserted hermitage of Gautama and Ahalyā[3] and arrived at Mithilā; Cunningham has identified the city of Vaiśālī with the modern village of Besārh, wherein are found the ruins of an ancient fort which is still called *Rāja-Bisal-ka-garh*,[4] or the fort of Rāja Visāla who even according to the Rāmāyaṇa is the founder of the city.[5] The existence of Vaiśālī and Mithilā as two kingdoms bespeaks an era prior to the age of the Buddha. By the time of the Buddha, Vaiśālī had become the city of the Licchavis, who in turn appear to be a branch of the Vajjis; in fact, it was the capital of the whole Vajjian confederacy.

§ 9. In the course of this journey Viśvāmitra entertained his young companions with legends relating to the places they passed. Thus on the bank of Śoṇa, in reply to a question by Rāma he narrates the story of king Kuśa and his children. The country, wherein they were, was once called *Vasu* and was surrounded by five mountains.[6] And the river Sumāgadhā which flowed through it gave it the name Māgadha.[7] Māgadha, as such, is to be located towards the east of Śoṇa and, being a place often referred to in the Buddhist and the Jain Canons, its identification with South Bihar presents no difficulties. The Rāmāyaṇa knows of Māgadha only as a place inhabited by opulent people (*Samṛddhajanasevitaḥ*)[8] and fertile with rich fields of corn (*sukṣetrā śasyamālinī*)[9] ,but the rising political glory of the country which we find amply alluded to in the Buddhist and the Jain texts, is not depicted in the Rāmāyaṇa. Nor is Pāṭalīputra whose construction is ascribed to Ajātaśatru, the son of Bimbisāra, known to the Rāmāyaṇa. These, no doubt, indicate the fact that the geographical data of the Rāmāyaṇa refer to the pre-Buddhistic period.

§ 10. Viśvāmitra, further, describes *en passant* the building of Kauśāmbi, Mahodaya, Prāgjyotiṣa and Girivraja by the four sons of Kuśa, Kuśāmba, Kuśanābha, Amūrtavayas and Vasu respectively.[10] Moreover, the popular tale which seeks to explain the change of name from Mahodaya to Kānyakubja is given in detail.[11] Another place cited in the course of Viśvāmitra's narratives, is Kāmpilla[12] whose king Brahmadatta accepted the daughter of Kuśanābha in marriage. Lastly, Viśvāmitra mentions the river Kauśikī which he identifies with his sister Satyavatī.[13]

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1 NW I, 32, 10
2 NW I, 43, 14 ff.
3 NW I, 44, 10 ff.
4 Cunningham: *op. cit.*, p. 507
5 NW I, 43, 14
6 NW I, 30, 7 & 9
7 NW I, 30, 8
8 NW I, 29, 21
9 NW I, 30, 10
10 NW I, 30, 5-7
11 NW I, 30, 10-35
12 NW I, 30, 44
13 NW I, 31, 8

§ 11. Of the four cities of Kuśa's sons, *Kauśambī* is identified with Kosam, 31 miles from Allahabad[1], and *Mahodaya* or *Kānyakubja* with Kanauj while *Girivraja*, situated between five mountains, was observed by Fa-hsien to be located "4 li or two thirds of a mile to the south of the new town of Rājagṛha"[2] which is identical with modern Rājgir in the Patna District. Girivraja alone is known in both the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata. (In the latter it is the city of Jarāsandha, the king of Māgadha). Rājagṛha (Pāli *Rājagaha* and Ardhamāgadhī *Rāyagiha*) which was built by Bimbisāra at the time of the Buddha[3] finds no mention in the Rāmāyaṇa but in the Buddhist texts Girivraja (Pāli *Giribbaja*) is generally regarded as identical and the commentary to Suttanipāta explains that Rājagaha is called Giribbaja because it is surrounded by the five mountains, Paṇḍava, Gijjhakūṭa, Vebhāra, Isigili and Vepulla.[4] Law seems to follow the Buddhist tradition when he says "The ancient name of the city was Girivraja."[5] But their distinction is clear enough and Girivraja which only was in existence prior to the Buddhist era is mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa.

§ 12. As regards the city built by Amūrtavayas the recensions of the Rāmāyaṇa are not in agreement. The BE attributes to him a city by the name of Dharmāraṇya.[6] The NW mentions also a place by the name of Dharmāraṇya, close to which Vasu built Girivraja.[7] Nundo Lal Dey locates it four miles from Buddha Gayā in the district of Gayā.[8] *Prāgjyotiṣa* may be the city of Kāmarūpa on the borders of Assam; but no evidence sufficiently cogent is available in the Rāmāyaṇa or elsewhere to assume that this city of Kāmarūpa was existing in the pre-Christian era. Nundo Lal Dey thinks that there was another city by that name on the bank of river Vetravatī.[9] Further, the disagreement in the recensions seems to warrant our assumption that the inclusion of this name is late. *Kāmpilla*, also known as *Kāmpilya*, is identified with modern Kampil in the Farrukhabad district. The river, Kauśikī (Pāli: *Kosikī* and Ardhamāgadhī: *Kosiā*) is identifiable with river Kosī, which is a tributary of Gaṅgā.

§ 13. Two more places which were mentioned in connection with the journey of Viśvāmitra were Vidarbha[10] and Sāṅkāsya.[11] Vidarbha, whose king's daughter Keśini was married to Sagara, is a very old kingdom and is identified with Berar. Sāṅkāsya (Pāli Saṅkassa or Saṅkissa) was governed by Kuśadhvaja, the brother of Janaka. It

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1 Cunningham: *op. cit.*, p. 453
2 Cunningham: *ibid.*, p. 530
3 Rhys Davids: *Buddhist India* p. 27
4 Paramatthajotikā (P.T.S.) II p. 382
5 Law: GEL p. 15
6 BE I, 32, 7
7 NW I, 307, (*dharmāraṇyasamīpastham Vasuś cakre Girivrajam*)
8 Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 56
9 Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 158
10 NW I, 35, 3
11 NW I, 66, 3

was situated on the river Ikṣumatī. This is the place where the Buddha is supposed to have descended from Tāvatiṃsa Devaloka after preaching the Abhidhamma.[1] "The place is generally identified with Sankissa Basantapura, situated on the north bank of the river Ikṣumatī, now called Kālinadī, between Atranji and Kanoj and 23 miles west of Fatehgarh in the district of Etah and 45 miles north-west of Kanoj."[2]

§ 14. In the narrative of the descent of Gaṅgā are mentioned the Himālayas and the Vindhya range[3] as well as Gokarṇa, where Bhagīratha is said to have performed penance[4]. The commentary on BE I, 42, 12 gives two alternative identifications for Gokarṇa, namely *Himavat pādaviśeṣaḥ Dakṣiṇadiksthatīrthaviśeṣo vā*.[5] Gokarṇa of the Himālayas is referred to in the Buddhist Sanskrit literature.[6] Gokarṇa, in the south may be the same as the "place of pilgrimage sacred to Śiva on the west coast, near Mangalore."[7] It is quite likely that the Rāmāyaṇa alludes to Gokarṇa of the south because the usual place of penance in the epic is the forest tract of the Deccan rather than the Himālayas. Thus Śatānanda in relating the story of Viśvāmitra says that he went to Puṣkara in the west for the performance of his austerities.[8] Puṣkara, which is identified with a tank five or six miles from Ajmir[9] had been well known as a holy place. A Nāsik Cave Inscription of the time of Nahapāna (circa 119—124 A.D.) mentions Puṣkara among the *tīrthas* visited by Usavadāta.[10] The place, to which Viśvāmitra went afterwards, namely Kauśikītīra in the north, may be the upper basin of the river Kosi.

§ 15. The second route described in the Rāmāyaṇa is that taken by the messengers who rode from Ayodhyā to Girivraja to fetch Bharata. The precarious political situation in Ayodhyā after the exile of Rāma and the sudden death of Daśaratha made it imperative that the messengers should choose the shortest cut to Girivraja. Their route lay through Hastināpura, where they crossed Gaṅgā, Pañcāladeśa, Kurujāṅgala, Vāruṇītīrtha, Kurukṣetra, Sarasvatī, Śaradaṇḍā, Triliṅga, Puri, Ajakūla, Bauddhānām nagara, Śatarudrā, Vipāśā and Śālmalī and it took seven days for them to cover the distance.[11] The same route is somewhat differently described in the BE. The messengers, here, set out from Ayodhyā and going along the river Mālinī which flowed between Aparatāla in the west and Pralambha in the north crossed Gaṅgā at Hastināpura. Travelling through Pañcāladeśa and Kurujāṅgala and passing on the way lakes and rivers they forded Śaradaṇḍā,

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1 Malalasekera: DPPN *s.v.*
2 Law: GEL p. 40
3 NW I, 36, 4
4 NW I, 39, 13
5 BE p. 76
6 Law: GEL p. 46
7 Dowson: CD p. 113
8 NW I, 57, 3
9 Dowson: CD p. 250
10 Cf. Sircar: *Select Inscriptions*, I, p. 162
11 NW II, 74, 11-16

and, having offered their oblations at Satyopayācana, entered the city of Kuliṅgā. Thence they went to the mountain Sudāmāna passing through the Vāhlīkas. Then crossing Vipāśā and Śālmalī and a number of other rivers they arrived at Girivraja.[1]

§ 16. It appears that the two accounts are complementary rather than altogether divergent. If the NW is sketchy in describing the route between Ayodhyā and Hastināpura, the BE skipped over a number of places between Kurujāṅgala and Śaradaṇḍā and between Kuliṅgā and Vipāśā. The river Mālinī may be identified, as Griffith had done, with the western tributary of Sarayū, now called *Chuka*.[2] Aparatāla and Pralambha are apparently located on its banks. Hastināpura, which in the Mahābhārata is very important being the capital of the Kauravas was situated on the bank of Gaṅgā. The ruins of this city "are traceable near an old bed of the Ganges about 57 miles NE of Delhi, and the local tradition has preserved the name.[3] Pañcāladeśa here seems to represent the country to the west of Hastināpura while Kurujāṅgala might have been a forest stretch in the upper part of the Doab.[4] Vāruṇītīrtha cannot be identified exactly although it is clear that it was located somewhere between Kurujāṅgala and Kurukṣetra; Kurukṣetra, the famous battle-field wherein the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas fought, comprised the country adjacent to Thānesar between the rivers Dṛṣadvatī and Sarasvatī,[5] which, now called Sarsuti, is lost in the desert.[6]

§ 17. The next important river on this route being Dṛṣadvatī one may conjecture that Śaradaṇḍā which is difficult to be identified is the same as Dṛṣadvatī but there is absolutely no foundation for such a surmise. Das thinks that it along with Ikṣumatī must have been tributary of the Śatadru.[7] Triliṅga, which in the BE is Kuliṅgā, Ajakūla, which in Griffith's translation is Abhikāla and Sudāmāna mountain cannot be identified with any degree of accuracy while the city called Bauddhānam nagara in the NW and Bodhīnāṃ nagara[8] in the GE is curious as a place-name of this part of India. Vāhlīkas, through whom the messengers are said to have gone in the BE, present a problem of a different nature. Though it is well-known that a tribe of people by that name existed in the north-western frontier regions of India at this time, it is just impossible that they occupied the area to the east of Beas. The reading *Bāhika* which has been adopted in the translation of Griffith appears to be the more probable because we have, as shown

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1 BE II, 68, 12-21
2 Das: AGA p. 26
3 Dowson: CD p. 120
4 Cf. Dowson: CD p. 172
5 Cf. Jain: LIJC p. 304
6 For an interesting account of this river Cf. Law: GEL pp. 86 f.
7 Das: AGA p. 25
8 GE II, 70, 15

by Das, the testimony of the Mahābhārata for the existence of a tribe of such nomenclature between Sutlej and Indus.[1] Śatarudrā is no doubt a corruption of Śatadru which is the modern Sutlej. While Vipāśā (Vipāś of the Ṛgveda) is modern Beas, Śālmalī remains an obscure river.

§ 18. A dire lack of certainty is obvious in the accounts of this route in the three recensions of the Rāmāyaṇa. Besides omitting certain place-names, variations as in the case of Triliṅga and Kuliṅgā, apparent errors as the corruption of Śatadru into Śatarudrā and confusion of names as in Vāhlīkas for Bāhikas may prove that the western regions of India were less familiar to the composers of the Rāmāyaṇa.

§ 19. The third route, described in the Rāmāyaṇa is that from Girivraja to Ayodhyā, which was taken by Bharata. According to NW Bharata crossed Śatadru and Bījavāṭyā and came to Amarakaṇṭaka. Then he crossed the rivers Śilāmakachagā and Agneyī and travelled through the forest of Caitraratha to Yamunā where the party bathed. Crossing Hiraṇyodā at Ahisthala and passing the Toraṇas on the south they came to Vāraṇasthala and Yāma. Thence traversing through *Śalyavana-durga* and fording the river Uttārikā and other rivers they came to Saptaspardhā, Kulinā and Lauhityā. Passing through Eka-śalyā, Sthānavatī and Vinatā they crossed Gomatī at Kaliṅganagara and entered a thick śāla-forest. Fording Gaṅgā at Haritīrtha they proceeded again to Gomatī which they crossed in the following morning.[2] From there they saw Ayodhyā.

§ 20. As in the previous instance here too the BE gives an account of the route, which is almost altogether different from that of the NW. Bharata and his party, according to the BE, crossed Sudāmā and Hrādinī before they came to Śatadru which apparently they crossed at Ailadhāna. Travelling through Aparaparvataśilā, Akurvatī Agneya, and the forest of Caitraratha, they came to Sarasvatī and Gaṅgā. Passing through Uttara of the Vīramatsyas they entered the forest Bhāruṇḍa. Then they crossed the river called Kuliṅgā and refreshed themselves by bathing in Yamunā. Passing a great forest they came to Gaṅgā (=*Bhāgīrathī*) at Aṃśudhāna and crossed it at Prāgvaṭa. Travelling through Toraṇa on the south they came to Jambūprastha and the beautiful village of Varūtha; spending some time in the adjoining forest and crossing all *tīrthas* of the river Uttaragā and other rivers they forded Kapīvatī at Lohitya, Sthānumatī at Ekaśāla and Gomatī at Vinata. They passed through the *śāla*-forest at Kaliṅganagara and in the morning saw Ayodhyā. It is said that they spent seven nights on the way.[3]

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1 Das: AGA p. 24
2 NW II, 77, 2-16
3 BE II, 71, 1-18

§ 21. The differences between the two accounts indicate again that the places of the western region are less familiar to the composers of the Rāmāyaṇa. A clear error in the NW is the statement that Gomatī was crossed twice by Bharata and his party. However, the identification of most of the places is problematic. Amarakaṇṭaka is definitely not the place of worship by that name in the east of the Vindhyas. Caitraratha is known to Sanskrit literature more as the mythical grove of Kuvera than a place in western India. Yamunā, of course, is easily identified. Gomatī is definitely the modern river Gumti but a city called Kaliṅganagara, between it and Ayodhyā is obscure because the only city by that name, we know in India, is the capital of Kaliṅga, which is identified with modern Mukhalingam.

§ 22. The route taken by Bharata is an unusual one and hence the difficulty in identifying the places. On the other hand the route taken by the messengers appears to be a part of the Campā-Puṣkalāvatī trade route[1] (III § 61).

§ 23. By far the most important account of Eastern and Peninsular India is met with in the description of the wanderings of Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa in exile from Ayodhyā to Daṇḍakāraṇya and thence the itinerary of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to Laṅkā in search of Sītā. They set out from Ayodhyā in a chariot and came to the River Tamasā, where they spent their first night in exile.[2] After going northwards so as to prevent the people from following them, they keep to the route of Tamasā (*Tamasāmārgam*).[3] The NW does not give any details as regards the road between Tamasā and Gomatī; on the other hand, BE mentions a river by the name of Vedaśruti, which they had to cross before reaching Gomatī.[4] The same river is referred to in GE;[5] but it mentions a river by the name of Śrīmatī Mahānadī between Tamasā and Vedaśruti and there is no allusion to it in the other two recensions.[6] They cross Gomatī, which NW describes as a great river (*mahānadī*)[7] and BE as possessing marshes abounding in cattle (*goyutānūpām*)[8]; crossing this river Rāma thinks nostalgically of Saray*ū*.[9] Thence they pass through the country given to Ikṣvākus by Manu[10] and go to Śṛṅgavīrapura, the city of the Niṣādas;[11] the other two recensions mention a river, which they crossed before reaching Śṛṅgavīrapura. That is differently named as Syandikā in BE[12] and Sarpikā in GE.[13]

§ 24. At Śṛṅgavīrapura, they are met by the Niṣāda king, Guha, who provided them with the boats to cross Gaṅgā. Gaṅgā is described

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1 Cf. Bose: SREI II pp. 289 f.
2 NW II, 48, 1
3 NW II, 48, 30
4 BE II, 49, 9
5 GE II, 46, 10
6 GE II, 46, 3
7 NW II, 50, 3
8 BE II, 49, 10
9 NW II, 50, 10
10 NW II, 50, 11
11 NW II, 50, 16
12 BE II, 49, 11
13 GE II, 46, 12

here as three-pathed (*tripathagā*) auspicious (*puṇyā*) divine (*divyā*) and associated by Ṛṣis (*ṛṣisevitā*).[1] The country beyond it was covered with thick jugnles, full of herds of elephants and was difficult to be traversed.[2] Having sent away Sumantra, Rāma with his wife and his brother walks until they arrive at the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā;[3] there at Prayāga, which is described as a "*devasthānam anuttamam*,[4] they visit the hermitage of Bharadvāja.[5] Traversing through a forest which according to GE is the Prayāga forest, one and a half yojanas from Śṛṅgaverapura,[6] they come to Yamunā or Kālindī which they cross on a raft.[7] They pass through a forest known as Nīla,[8] which according to BE was one krośa off from Nyagrodha[9]; then they travel through Yamunāvana[10] and arrive at Citrakūṭa which was three yojanas from Prayāga[11] and which was watered by the river Mandākinī;[12] NW and GE mention another river by the name of Mālinī.[13] While they were there Bharata visited them and requested Rāma to return to Ayodhyā.

§ 25. From Citrakūṭa they travel to the hermitage of Atri[14] where Anasūyā gives Sītā the "*Aṅgarāgavilepana.*"[15] Then they enter the great forest called the Daṇḍakāraṇya, where Rama sees groups of hermitages of virtuous ascetics.[16] They visit Śarabhaṅga at his hermitage which was nearby.[17] Thence they visit the hermitage of Sutīkṣṇa.[18] Crossing a river, whose name is not given in NW but given in GE as Mahajavā[19] they see a hill with a wide blue forest.[20] Travelling a long distance through the forest they come to the hermitage of Dharmarati,[21] who is named Dharmabhṛt in the other recensions.[22] From him they learn the name of the lake, Pañcāpsara[23]. Here they lived for nine years according to NW[24] or ten years according to the other two,[25] and returned to Sutīkṣṇa's hermitage.[26]

§ 26. Having obtained the directions from Sutīkṣṇa they go to the hermitage of Agastya's brother[27] and on the following day to that of Agastya.[28] On the advice of Agastya they settle down in Pañcavaṭī, which was two yojanas from Agastya's hermitage[29] and which was

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1 NW II, 51, 1
2 NW II, 96, 13
3 NW II, 58, 2 & 6
4 NW II, 58, 5 and II 102, 20
5 NW II, 58, 7
6 GE II, 98, 18
7 NW II, 59, 11
8 NW II, 59, 19
9 BE II, 55, 6
10 BE II, 55, 23
11 NW II, 58, 31
12 NW II, 58, 39
13 NW II, 60, 7; GE II, 56, 7
14 NW III, 1, 36
15 NW III, 1, 78
16 NW III, 4, 1
17 NW III, 5, 46
18 NW III, 8, 1
19 GE II, 11, 2
20 NW III, 8, 2
21 NW III, 12, 8
22 Cf. BE III, 11, 8
23 NW III, 12
24 NW III, 13, 5
25 BE III, 11, 27 & GE III, 15, 28
26 NW III, 13, 6
27 NW III, 14, 4
28 NW III, 15, 24
29 NW III, 18, 5

near Godāvarī.[1] Janasthāna was not far away from Pañcavaṭī and it even appears that the latter was a part of Janasthāna.[2]

§ 27. The places mentioned in this account can, on the whole, be fairly satisfactorily identified. Tamasā and Gomatī are the rivers, Tons and Gumti. Vedaśruti is identified by Pargiter[3] with Chukā, a tributary of the Sarayū (II § 16). Śrīmatī Mahānadī, to which there is no reference in NW and BE, is an epithet to a river rather than a name; Pargiter, as such, considers it to be an adjective to Sarayū because "the river of Ayodhyā might well be described in such laudatory terms[4] (II § 2). Śṛṅgavīrapura which in GE and BE and sometimes in NW occurs as Śṛṅgaverapura, has been identified by Cunningham with the modern town, Singror or Singor (also spelt as Sungroor), which is situated on the left bank of the Ganges about twenty-two miles northwest of Allahabad.[5] G. Ramdas attempts to show that the name is a polyglottism of two Aryan and non-Aryan words. "Śṛṅgi", he explains, "is a Sanskrit name generally given to villages near a hill. Bera (*sic*) is the Śavara word for a hill."[6] Whatever be the origin of the name, it is clear that Śṛṅgavīrapura was the capital of a non-Aryan tribe called the Niṣādas and that it was on the outskirts of the Aryan civilization because Rāma had to dismiss his chariot after reaching this point[7] and walk in the pathless forests and because it was the last place where boats were available to cross rivers. Prayāga at the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā is now known as Allahabad and it is still a holy place. Bharata, on his way to request Rāma to return to the kingdom, "circumambulated and worshipped that unrivalled abode of gods."[8] Although this may refer to any object of worship, it is likely that the Devasthāna, here, is none other than the well-known Akṣaya Vaṭa, the undecaying banyan, which is regarded by the Hindus as a holy place of pilgrimage. It may be even conjectured whether the holiness of the place as depicted in the Rāmāyaṇa was not due to the fact that Bharadvāja lived there.

§ 28. The Prayāga forest, Nīla and Nyagrodha and the Yamunā forest appear to have been between Prayāga and Citrakūṭa—a distance of three yojanas. Citrakūṭa is identified by Nundo Lal Dey with Kāmptānāth-giri in Bundelkhand. Pargiter regards it as the range of hills stretching from the river Ken to about twenty miles off Allahabad.[9] The description in the Rāmāyaṇa suits a mountain better than a range of hills. Kāmptānāth-giri, which is four miles from the Railway Station of modern Citrakut, is a better identification. Mandākinī has been

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1 NW III, 18, 11
2 NW III, 23, 25
3 Pargiter: JRAS (1894) p. 236
4 Pargiter: *op. cit.*, p. 236
5 Pargiter: *ibid.*, p. 235
6 Ramdas: JBORS XI p. 49
7 Cf. Pargiter: *op. cit.*, p. 237
8 NW II, 102, 20
9 Pargiter: *op. cit,.* p. 239

identified by Cunningham in his Archaeological Report XXI (page 11) with the modern river Mandakin which flows into Paisunī near Citrakūṭa mountain.[1] Monier Williams has taken it to be Paisunī itself which he calls Piśunī.[2] It is clear that there were two rivers in the vicinity of Citrakūṭa; and the Rāmāyaṇa, too, mentions two rivers namely Mandākinī and Mālinī. Although the identification of Mandākinī with Mandakin is generally accepted, no attempt has been made to connect Mālinī with modern Paisunī. On the other hand, Nundo Lal Dey regards them as synonyms.[3] It is not certain whether he has any references in other works in support of their identity. But from the data in the Rāmāyaṇa, we may consider them to be the two rivers of Citrakūṭa and identify Mālinī with Paisunī.

§ 29. From the Rāmāyaṇa it appears that Citrakūṭa was included in the Daṇḍakāraṇya because Rāma, who was ordered to leave for Daṇḍakāraṇya, decided to reside in Citrakūṭa. If the later statement is authentic Citrakūṭa is to be located to the north of Daṇḍaka forest. Daṇḍakāraṇya, which according to the Mahābhārata appears to be the forest around the source of the Godāvarī river, seems, from the description in the Rāmāyaṇa, to be the whole of Central India from Bundelkhand to Godāvarī.[4] D. R. Bhandarkar, who shows how the Hindus of Mahārāṣṭra begin their ceremonies with the words '*Asmin Daṇḍakāraṇyadeśe*', and therefore identifies Daṇḍaka forest with Mahārāṣṭra, agrees with Pargiter in inferring that "Daṇḍakāraṇya was the name of that stretch of forest land which extends from Bundelkhand to the Krishnā."[5] The term Daṇḍaka had been according to tradition connected with the name of a king, Daṇḍaka in Pāli and Daṇḍagī in Ardhamāgadhī. According to both the Buddhist[6] and the Jain[7] records the forest had been originally occupied by a prosperous kingdom which was destroyed by the wrath of the gods when the king ill-treated a pious ascetic. The Uttarakāṇḍa of the Rāmāyaṇa shows how Daṇḍa was punished with the destruction of his kingdom by an ascetic, for seducing his daughter, Arajā.[8] Pargiter is of opinion that the name Daṇḍaka seems to be an eponym to account for the name of the forest, because it clashes with the other statements about the many kings that occupied the Dekhan. "However that may be, the noteworthy point is that the original sovereignty in that region was attributed to the same stock or race which was dominant in Ayodhyā and Videha."[9] A new interpretation of the name is attempted by G. Ramdas, who explains the word etymologically as Dān+Dāk+ā; Dān means "water" in Śavara

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1 Cf. Law: GEL p. 111
2 Monier-Williams: IW p. 353 fn.
3 Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 122 s.v. Mālini 2.
4 Law: GEL p. 159
5 Bhandarkar: *Jha Com. Vol.*, p. 50
6 Majjhimanikāya (P.T.S.) I, p. 378
7 Jain: LIJC p. 279
8 BE VII, 80
9 Pargiter: AIHT p. 258

language while Dāk also means "water." So he regards it as signifying "the forest of much water."[1] This explanation is accepted by Kibe who makes use of it in his identification of Laṅkā.[2]

§ 30. The hermitage of Śarabhaṅga is located by Pargiter on the "Satpura Range or almost anywhere on the western part of the modern Vindhya Range."[3] Mahājavā is obscure as the name of a river and Pargiter conjectures it to be the upper part of the river Narmadī.[4] The authenticity of this name is, however, questionable because of its appearance only in the GE. The hill with a wide blue forest seen by Rāma is identified by Pargiter with Mahadeva Hills.[5] Pañcāpsara lake, where Rāma and Sītā lived for nine or ten years, is believed to be in Ramgarh Hill[6] although the data for its identification are meagre. V.R.R. Dikshitar places it "on the edge of the commencement of the forest Daṇḍaka at the northern side."[7] If this spot is what was called Rāmagiri by Kālidāsa in his Meghadūta, it can be regarded as the modern Rāmtek near Nagpur. However a place round about Nagpur appears to be the most probable when the places mentioned on the way are taken into consideration. The supposition that the Pañcāpsaras lake is represented by Kapu, Bandhanpur, Banjiamba and Ponri in the Udaypur district of Chota-Nagpur division is also worth considering.[8]

§ 31. Pañcavaṭī, which was the next important place in their itinerary, is generally identified with modern Nāsik on the Godāvarī river.[9] Still a place near Nāsik is called Pañcavaṭī[10] and Nāsik traces the origin of its name to the incident in the Rāmāyaṇa of Lakṣmaṇa cutting the nose of Śūrpaṇakhā. Janasthāna which is not far away is identified with the region on both banks of the Godāvarī—"probably the country around the junction of that river with Pranhita or Wainganga."[11] And Prasravanagiri where Jaṭāyu resided is one of the hills of Aurangabad.[12]

§ 32. A comparison can be made between this route taken by Rāma and his party and that taken by the pupils of Bāvari who came to see Buddha from Patiṭṭhāna of Alaka. Patiṭṭhāna, (Sanskrit *Pratiṣṭhāna*) and Pañcavaṭī were on the bank of Godāvarī and the distance between could not have exceeded two hundred miles; but the route from Patiṭṭhāna to Sāvatthi lay through Mahissati, Ujjeni, Gonaddha, Vedisā, Vana-sabhaya, Kosambi and Sāketa.[13] All these places are identifiable with a great degree of accuracy because the names remain unchanged

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1 Ramdas: JBORS XI p. 47
2 Kibe: *Location of Laṅkā*
3 Pargiter: JRAS (1894) p. 244
4 Pargiter: *loc. cit.*, p. 245
5 Pargiter: *loc. cit.*, p. 245
6 Pargiter: *ibid.*, p. 246
7 Dikshitar: IC I p. 582
8 Nundo Lal Dey: GE p. 146
9 Cf. Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 147 & Dikshitar: IC I p. 584
10 Bhandarkar: *Jha Com. Vol.* p.47
11 Pargiter: *op. cit.*, p. 247
12 Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 159
13 Sutta Nipāta (P.T.S.) p. 194 Cf. Bose: SREI II p. 287

in the later inscriptions and are generally better known places than those mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa between Ayodhyā (Sāketa) and Pañcavaṭī, as they were important stations in the southern trade route.

§ 33. The difference between the routes of the Sutta Nipāta and the Rāmāyaṇa may be explained in two ways. *Firstly*, it may be said that Rāma being an exile avoided the open routes and followed the jungle paths resorting whenever necessary to hermitages for rest and protection. *Secondly*, it may be argued that the picture of this area depicted in the Buddhist Canon is much later than that reflected in the Rāmāyaṇa because the latter represents this region as exceedingly primitive. Further, the southern India as described in the Rāmāyaṇa had not been penetrated into by the Aryans other than the adventurous sages like Agastya. As an additional proof of the reflection of India of a later era in the Buddhist texts may be cited the references to ascetics repairing to the Himālayas, while the Rāmāyaṇa speaks always of ascetics in the jungles of southern India. It is quite likely that by the time of the Buddhist texts the southern region was so widely colonized by the Aryans and the place of forests taken by kingdoms, that it was no longer possible to find a peaceful spot for spiritual activity in this area; hence the predilection for the Himālayan forests in the Buddhist texts. Moreover, it was observed that the state of North India depicted in the Rāmāyaṇa was of pre-Buddhist times and there is no reason why it should be otherwise in the case of Southern India.

§ 34. At Pañcavaṭī Sītā is abducted by Rāvaṇa and the journey to the south in search of her is undertaken by Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. The comment in the NW that Rāma sent Lakṣmaṇa to search for Sītā on the bank of Mandākinī[1] should be dismissed as an error caused by the wrong association of Pañcavaṭī with Citrakūṭa. Searching in a southern or a south-western[2] direction they come to Krauñcāṭavī, called Kraũcālaya in the GE.[3] At the behest of Kabandha they go to the lake Pampā at the Ṛṣyamūka mountain,[4] where Sugrīva is. On the mountain is Mātaṅgavana;[5] at the advent of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa Sugrīva leaves this forest and retreats to the Malaya Mountain.[6] After the alliance with Sugrīva and the deposition of Vālin, Rāma instals Sugrīva as the king of Kiṣkindhya and retires to Prasravaṇagiri to await the end of the rainy season, when it would be possible to continue the search for Sītā.

§ 35. When necessary information is procured by Hanumat the march to the south begins. Marching day and night, they arrive at Vindhya and Malaya mountains[7] and thence they come to Mahen-

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1 NW III, 69, 25-26
2 Cf. Pargiter: *op. cit.*, p. 250
3 NW III, 76, 7
4 NW III, 78, 39
5 NW III, 80, 22
6 NW IV, 2, 1
7 NW V, 71, 28

dragiri and to Velāvana, beyond which lay the ocean.[1] There a bridge, or rather a causeway, is built and among the peaks of mountains thrown into the ocean for this purpose were Vindhya and Malaya.[2] Then they reach Laṅkā, an island a hundred yojanas from Mahendragiri of the main land.[3]

§ 36. Krauñcāṭavi appears to be the forest tract between Godāvarī and Kṛṣṇā and as such it forms the southern fringe of the Daṇḍakāraṇya. Ṛṣyamūka is identified by Nundo Lal Dey with "a mountain situated eight miles from Anagandi on the bank of the Tuṅgabhadrā."[4] Pampā is a lake (*puṣkaraṇī ramyā*)[5] in the Rāmāyaṇa; but in this mountain rises a river by the name of Pampā. A lake near the river, which is called *Pampāsarovara*, is identified with the lake mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa.[6]

§ 37. The most important country to the south of Pañcavaṭī and Janasthāna was Kiṣkindhā whose identification is problematic due to citations to another place of the same name in the Purāṇas. Bhandarkar shows that "Vyādha-Kiṣkindhā near the lake Pampā and not far from the temple of Vindhyavāsinī" is the same as Kiṣkindhā of the Purāṇas, which is described as "*Vindhyapratiṣṭhanivāsin.*"[7] But it is not possible to regard this to be the country mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa, because the identification of places to the north of it becomes very difficult. Yet a number of Indian writers have done so in order to explain the location of Vindhya to the south of Kiṣkindhā in the fourth kāṇḍa.[8] And they attempt to explain, as Cunningham did, that Godāvarī of the Rāmāyaṇa is the holy *Gupta Godāvarī*, which rushes forth from a cave nine miles south-south-west of Citrakūṭa."[9] This, however, is very unlikely and nothing but Godāvarī proper is referred to in the epic. As such the identification of Kiṣkindhā with Anagandi, on the left bank of Tuṅgabhadrā[10] is far more reliable. It is still popularly called Kiṣkindhā and certain places are even today associated with the events of the Rāmāyaṇa.[11] Further in this area have been discovered palaeolithic and neolithic remains which show that it had been an ancient inhabited site.[12] Prasravaṇagiri, which seems to be called also Mālyavān,[13] is identified by Pargiter with the curved lines of hills in the neighbourhood of Kupal, Mudgal and Raichur.[14]

§ 38. An interesting feature in the geographical account of the country between Kiṣkindhā and Laṅkā is that no cities or kingdoms are

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1 NW V, 72, 14-18
2 NW V, 97, 31 and 33
3 NW IV, 33, 30
4 Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 169
5 NW III, 79, 5
6 Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 144
7 Bhandarkar: *Jha Com. Vol.* pp. 51 ff.
8 Cf. Route to the South (II § 55)
9 Bhandarkar: *Jha Com. Vol.*, p. 52
10 IGI V, p. 373; Bhandarkar: *op. cit.*, p. 56
11 Nundo Lal Dey: GD pp. 100 f.
12 Pargiter: JRAS (1894) p. 257. Cf. Dikshitar: IC I p. 580
13 Cf. NW IV, 20, 1 and IV, 21
14 Pargiter: *op. cit.*, p. 257

mentioned while the only landmarks appear to be the mountains. Sugrīva once enumerates some of them as Mahendra, Malaya, Sahya, Kailāsa Śikhara, Mandara, Pārśvagiri and Pañcāla.[1] Of these the location of the last four in south India is difficult. But the other three are very important although due to some confusion the Rāmāyaṇa presents difficulties of associating them with various events of the story. When it is said that Sugrīva at the sight of Rāma retreated to the Malaya mountain, we find it difficult to extend the Malaya range upto Ṛṣyamūka unless we regard it to be the same as the Sahya range. The latter, too, is referred to in the Rāmāyaṇa thus showing that two ranges were known at the time. Further, Ayomukha of BE IV, 41, 13 is explained by Govindrājā as Sahya. Although Dikshitar seems to regard Malaya to be "Sahya hill itself or a continuation of its chain"[2] we may consider this to be a confusion of the two. The Malaya, which Rāma met on his march to Laṅkā, may be identified with Travancore or Cardamum hills. Vindhya is an interesting case of toponymic duplication. Pargiter thinks that the application of "the name Vindhya to a range in South India is remarkable, and can hardly be other than original[3]" and he identifies it with "the hills and plateau of South Maisur."[4] V.R.R. Dikshitar, however, criticizes Pargiter and thinks that the mention of Vindhya on the extremity of the southern ocean "is evidently a mistake of the redactor" and that it stands for Sahyādri hill.[5] It is not possible at present to ascertain whether it was a mistake or otherwise without further evidence from other sources. But toponymic duplication is a very frequent occurrence in the colonization of new lands and in India itself enough evidence for this can be collected.

§ 39. Mahendra, too, will have to be regarded as a mountain on the southern fringe of India; the reference here is not to the well-known Mahendra Range of the Eastern Ghats. The accurate identification of these places in South India has been well nigh impossible because of the lack of sufficient data in the Rāmāyaṇa itself and corroborating evidence from other sources. The country to the south of Kiṣkindhā appears to be less known to the Northern Indians, and hence the confusion.

§ 40. The main bone of contention among the students of the geographical data in the Rāmāyaṇa has been the location of Laṅkā, the kingdom of Rāvaṇa. It has been accepted by many scholars that Laṅkā is the island of the same name to the south of India—which in English is called Ceylon.[6] The local tradition associates certain places of Ceylon with the incidents of the Rāmāyaṇa, although

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1 NW IV, 30, 2
2 Dikshitar: IC I, p. 581
3 Pargiter: *op. cit.*, p. 264
4 Pargiter: *ibid.*, p. 261
5 Dikshitar: IC I, p. 581
6 Cf. Das: AGA pp. 42 f; Pargiter: AIHT p. 277 fn. Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 113

the Rāmāyaṇa itself has not been very popular here. Sītāvaka and Sītā-Eliya are said to owe their names to Sītā and other place-names like *Kudā*–and *Maha-Rāvaṇa-Koṭuva* too reflect the Rāma story. The narrow ridge of twenty-two miles, out of which a number of islands project, between Rāmesvaram and Talaimannar is considered to be the causeway built by Rāma. Vibhīṣaṇa is still worshipped as a tutelary god and in the Mahāmāyūrī, a magical text of the Mahāyāna Buddhists, which was translated into Chinese in the 4th century A.D., he is named as the deity of Ceylon i.e. *Vibhīṣaṇas Tāmraparṇyām.*[1]

§ 41. Further the oldest historical tradition of Ceylon, incorporated in the two chronicles Dīpavaṃsa and Mahāvaṃsa speaks of a city called Laṅkāpura in Ceylon prior to the entry of the Aryans. Peopled by Yakṣas and Nāgas, Ceylon was at that time a fairly well-organised kingdom, whose king was killed by Vijaya with the aid of Kuvaṇṇā.[2] The authenticity of the name of the city is further borne out by the fact that the two chronicles do not show any familiarity with the Rāmāyaṇa or its story. Later traditions, recorded in the *Rājāvaliya*, not only date the Rāma-Rāvaṇa war but also say that the castle of Rāvaṇa was subsequently swallowed up by the sea.[3] Tamil tradition too "speaks of an area in Ceylon called *Ilaṅkai* which was to the south-east of Trincomalee on the east coast of the island; it was washed off by the sea and its name was extended to mean the whole island.[4] S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar observes that the "Tamil literature contains a few references earlier than those in Buddhist tradition, which associate the island with the story of the Rāmāyaṇa."[5] Thus if tradition is relied upon there is absolutely no difficulty in identifying Laṅkā with Ceylon.

§ 42. But a criticism against it is that the traditional legends could have arisen later as a result of the spread of the story; thus Keith says that "it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the identification of the more or less mythical Laṅkā with Ceylon is the product of the spread of the poem as Jacobi has argued."[6] However, it may be worthwhile to analyse the geographical data as regards Laṅkā, occurring in the Rāmāyaṇa. It is clearly an island in the ocean and the words used to represent the surrounding waters are specifically those used for the ocean i.e. *sāgara*, *samudra* and *lavaṇāmbhasaḥ.*[7] The city of Laṅkā, which too was called by that name was situated on the peak of Trikūṭa mountain.[8] The NW and the BE refer to a mountain by the name of Malaya in Laṇkā as *Laṅkāmalayasānuṣu.*[9] This is a very important fact for

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1 Sylvain Levi: JA V (1915) p. 33.
2 Cf. Mahāvaṃsa VII
3 *Rājāvaliya*, tr. by Edward Upham (London 1833) p. 191 (Cf. I § 96).
4 Pargiter: AIHT p. 277 fn. quoting Winslow's Tamil Dictionary. s.v. Ilaṅkai.
5 Aiyangar: SCSI p. 68.
6 Keith: JRAS (1915) p. 324.
7 NW V, 24, 31; V, 32, 10; III, 52, 26; V, 70, 27; BE VII, 3, 33; NW IV, 50, 34. etc.
8 NW V, 1, 1; V, 69, 19; IV, 55, 12 et.
9 NW V, 36, 49 and BE V, 39, 50.

the identification of Laṅkā with Ceylon because Malaya was exactly the name of the central hill country of Ceylon; in fact it was marked by Ptolemy in his map as *Malaea.*

§ 43. Two more citations in the Rāmāyaṇa—though in actually later parts—are informative. In the fourth Kāṇḍa where Sugrīva describes the southern direction, it is said that in the ocean was an island of a hundred yojanas, which is, however, not named.[1] It is quite obviously Laṅkā although its name is not mentioned here so as to leave room for the adventures of Hanumat and his party in their search for Laṅkā. Its position is clearly outlined and the only island which appears to satisfy the geographical conditions described in this canto is Ceylon. In the seventh book the wars of Rāma are referred to as having taken place *pāre samudrasya;*[2] although this expression may be explained literally, its identity with the old name of Ceylon, *Palaesimundu.* (*Pārasamudra*) cannot be altogether denied.[3]

§ 44. Finally, the return journey of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā by air is to be examined. It is almost the same route as was taken by them in their journey to Daṇḍakāraṇya and later to Laṅkā. From Laṅkā, where they see the city on the Trikūṭa mountain[4] and the Suvela mountain[5] they set out and crossing the ocean arrive at Hiraṇyanābha mountain;[6] thence they fly over Velāvana,[7] Mahendragiri[8] Kiṣkindhā,[9] Mālyavān[10] (Ṛṣyamūka),[11] Pampā,[12] Janasthāna,[13] Godāvarī, Prasravaṇagiri,[14] Agastyāśrama, Śarabhaṅgāśrama,[15] Atri's āśrama,[16] Citrakūṭa[17] Mandākinī,[18] Yamunā,[19] Vālmīki's āśrama[20] and reach the Bharadvāja hermitage.[21] Here they stop and send Hanumat to Nandigrāma with a message to Bharata. But the description of the air-journey is continued in NW VI,104 and they are said to have seen from the Puṣpaka Gaṅgā,[22] Śṛṅgaverapura[23] and Ayodhyā.[24]

§ 45. Hanumat, who took Rāma's message, saw on his way to Nandigrāma, Rāma-tīrtha, Śālūkinī nadī, Pauruṣī, Gomatī and a Śāla forest.[25] According to the BE he saw instead of Śālūkinī and Pauruṣī, Vālukinī and Varūthī.[26]

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1 NW IV, 33, 30
2 BE VII, 39, 51
3 G. C. Mendis: *The Early History of Ceylon*, (Calcutta 1947) p. 41
4 NW VI, 104, 3
5 NW VI, 104, 21
6 NW VI, 104, 31
7 NW VI, 104, 32
8 NW VI, 104, 35
9 NW VI, 104, 36
10 NW VI, 104, 37
11 NW VI, 104, 39
12 NW VI, 104, 41
13 NW VI, 104, 44
14 NW VI, 104, 48
15 NW VI, 104, 49
16 NW VI, 104, 50
17 NW VI, 104, 52
18 NW VI, 104, 53
19 NW VI, 104, 56
20 loc. cit.
21 NW VI, 104, 57
22 NW VI, 104, 57
23 NW VI, 104, 58
24 NW VI, 104, 61
25 NW VI, 106, 32-33
26 BE VI, 125, 26

§ 46. The places mentioned in this account of the return journey have been already identified and discussed; the only new places are Hiraṇyanābha Mountain, which, according to the description here, was near Mahendragiri and Nandigrāma, where Bharata was ruling with Rāma's sandals as his overlord, is identified by Nundo Lal Dey with "Nundgaon in Oudh, close to the Bharatakuṇḍa, eight or nine miles to the south of Fyzabad."[1] Rāmatīrtha, Śālūkinī, Pauruṣī, Vālukinī and Varūthī are difficult to be explained; but Varūtha is referred to in the third route (II § 20) as a beautiful village.

§ 47. Besides these the six kāṇḍas of the Rāmāyaṇa mention a few other places. Associated with the Vānara settlements are Vindhya,[2] Mahendra, Malaya, Sahya, Kailāsa, Mandara[3] and Sudarśana.[4] So is Añjanaparvata,[5] which is regarded also as the native place of Hanumat. Candrasya giri is the mountain from which he brought medicinal herbs to revive Lakṣmaṇa[6] while he leapt back to Mahendragiri from the Ariṣṭa-naga of Laṅkā.[7] Further Hanumat planned to enter the funeral pyre at Sāgarānūpaje deśe.[8] Among the mountains, referred to, are Meru,[9] Mandara,[10] Saṃkopaṇa,[11] Himavat[12] and Triśṛṅga.[13]

§ 48. Some of these have been already identified. Kailāsa and Mandara are well known mountains of the Himālayan range, Mandara is also the name of a mountain in Bhagalpur, two or three miles to the north of Baṃsī and thirty miles to the south of Bhagalpur.[14] Either of these mountains is meant when Sugrīva orders the Vānaras from Mandara to come to Kiṣkindhā. But as the case of Kailāsa makes it clear it is possible that he meant the two mountains of the Himālayan range. However, no great degree of accuracy can be attributed to this statement. Nundo Lal Dey identifies Añjanaparvata with a hill to the north-west of Pampāsarovara in Anegundi.[15] Saṃkopaṇa is a hill on the bank of Gomatī while Triśṛṅga, which occurs only in a simile cannot be identified. Meru, though identified with Sumeruparvata, the Rudra Himālaya in Garwal,[16] is more than a terrestrial mountain in popular belief and hence it may best be dealt with along with the cosmogonical data. *Candrasya giri* is apparently mythical in spite of the fact a mountain of that name exists near Belgola, not far from Seringapatam.[17] Anūpa literally means "marshy" and hence *Anūpaje deśe* may mean a marshy

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1 Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 138
2 NW VI, 3, 44
3 NW VI, 30, 2
4 NW VI, 2, 29
5 NW VI, 30, 5
6 NW VI, 104, 19
7 NW V, 56, 142
8 NW V, 8, 49
9 NW V, 34, 23
10 NW V, 34, 23; VI, 46, 94; II, 66, 29-30
11 NW VI, 2, 24
12 NW VI, 4, 2
13 NW III, 32, 10
14 Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 124
15 Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 101
16 Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 196
17 Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 47

land; however, it is also the name of a country. In the Rāmāyaṇa it appears to be referred to in the line "*Anūpaṃ Sindhurājasya*"; cited in the Junagarh inscription of Rudradāman I, and Nāsik cave inscription of Vāsiṣṭhīputra Pulumāvi[1] it is the country on Narbadā near Nimar.[2]

§ 49. Further, the Rāmāyaṇa mentions Surāṣṭra, Sauvīra,[3] and a city called Vaijayanta in Daṇḍaka.[4] While Surāṣṭra is Kathiawar, Sauvīra, about whose identification there are many theories, may be located to the North of Kathiawar and South-east of Zind.[5] Vaijayanta may be the same as Vanavāsi in North Kanara; but its existence at the time reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa is doubtful.

§ 50. Among the rivers are mentioned Vipāśā (Beas), Śatadru (Sutlej) Gaṅgā (Ganges), Yamunā, Sarasvatī (Sarsuti), Candrabhāga (Chenab)[6] and Narmadā, which flowed near Ṛkṣavat mountain.[7] Besides, a few places are mentioned as being noted for horses, elephants and sandalwood. Horses are described as Kāmbojadeśaja, Vanayuja Vāhlīja,[8] and Āraṭṭaja[9] while elephants are called Vindhyaparvataja; and the sandal tree is called Malayadruma. Kāmboja is the eastern part of Afghanistan, and Vāhli is Balkh. Vanayu is believed to be ancient Arabia,[10] while Āraṭṭa is Punjab.

§ 51. Moreover, the Rāmāyaṇa records the concept of a unitary India in the expression *Jambudvīpa* which is used a number of times.[11] It appears from the above analysis that the author of the Ramāyāṇa was fairly well acquainted with the major portion of India although he was apt to be more vague as the places were further away from Ayodhyā. The extreme south and the west were not very familiar to him. But it is certain that he had heard at least travellers' tales about these places. There is no doubt that information about the farthest places could reach the capital through the chain of hermitages which seem to have preserved some connection with one another. And the stories about Agastya show quite convincingly that the sages were the most active colonizers of Southern India (I § 25).

§ 52. It is also clear that the state of India described in the course of the story belongs to a very early period—it is specifically pre-Buddhistic. Although the Ramāyāṇa in its present form cannot be dated earlier than the fourth century B.C. the story appears to reflect at least the geographical conditions of an earlier era. And further, the story shows how places in newly colonized areas came to be named. V. Raghavan

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1 Sircar: *Select Inscriptions* pp. 172 and 196.
2 Cf. Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 8
3 NW III, 52, 37
4 NW II, 11, 12
5 Cf. Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 183
6 NW II, 89, 5
7 NW VI, 3, 9
8 GE I, 6, 24 & NW I, 6, 26
9 NW V, 4, 36
10 Das: AGA p. 5
11 NW VI, 81, 105; VI, 104, 18; I, 36, 24.

observes that Bodhi, Viṣṇupada and Girivraja in the eastern region of India are only toponymic duplication of places in the North-western region.[1] Likewise, Vindhya and Mahendra in the extreme south may have been named after their counterparts in the North. The data found in the course of the story may be safely regarded as the earliest accounts of the geography of India as a whole.

B. Geographical Data of the Kiṣkindhā Kāṇḍa

§ 53. The despatch of search-parties to find Sītā has given an interpolator an opportunity to introduce four cantos[2] of geographical details. These have been cleverly incorporated with the story by putting them in the mouth of Sugrīva who is also made to explain how he acquired his unique knowledge of the geography of India and her neighbours.[3] But yet they can easily be discerned as later additions because of two reasons. *Firstly*, the place from which the directions are given does not appear to be Kiṣkindhā; as Vaidya observes "the geography as given in the Kiṣkindhā kāṇḍa strangely enough takes for its centre a point somewhere near Delhi.....Thus countries and rivers which are to the north of Kiṣkindhā are mentioned as lying in the southern direction. In fact the unskilful compiler has copied without the necessary changes the description of the world as found in some work which naturally took for its centre Kurukṣetra."[4] *Secondly*, the three recensions do not preserve any uniformity and they differ not only as to the sequence but also the direction of many places. There are unusual repetitions and the whole account appears to be a jumble of names put into some vague order with very little care.

§ 54. However, these cantos mention places within India fairly satisfactorily while the lands beyond are purely imaginary. Geography merges into cosmology at this point. The main use of these lists is that we can thereby know the topographical names current in India during the latter part of the period, assigned by us for the growth of the Rāmāyaṇa (i.e. 1st and 2nd centuries A.D.). From other sources we are aware that at this time not only the whole of India but also many of the adjacent countries were well known. As such the Rāmāyaṇa does not throw any new light on the question of the widening of the Indian geographical horizon. On the other hand, a comparison of these with the data given in the story proper shows beyond doubt that the latter depicts India of a much earlier period.

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1 Raghavan: *Indian Geographical Journal*, XVIII pp. 98 f.
2 NW IV 32-33; 35-36
3 NW IV 37, 14 ff.
4 VAIDYA: RRV p. 40

§ 55. As most of the places mentioned are either already discussed or easily identified, the lists are given here, with no identifications, with the idea of illustrating the divergences in the three recensions:— (the numbers are given as a guide to trace the correlation among the three lists).

THE ROUTE TO THE EAST

NW IV, 32, 13-56	BE IV, 40, 19-68	GE IV, 40, 1-68
1 Yamunā	3 Bhāgīrathī	1 Yamunā
2 Yāmunaṃ vanaṃ	4 Sarayū	2 Yāmunaṃ mahāgiriṃ
3 Bhāgīrathī	5 Kauśikī	3 Bhāgīrathī
4 Sarayū	Kālindi	4 Sarayū
5 Kauśikī	1 Yamunā	5 Kauśikī
6 Śoṇa	2 Yāmunaṃ giriṃ	6 Śoṇa
Kāveri	Sarasvatī	7 Candanīm
7 Candanaṃ	Sindhu	Vedavaināsikam
8 Kālamahīn	6 Śoṇa	Mahīsikam
9 Tamasā	Mahīm	Śaka-Pulinda
10 Gomatī	8 Kālamahīm	Kāliṅga
11 Pūrvā Sarasvatī	Brahmamalam	Daṇḍakāraṇya
12 Magadha	16 Videha	Godāvarī
13 Kāśī	Mālava	8 Kālamasīm
14 Kosala	13 Kāśī	9 Tamasām
15 Malaya	14 Kosala	Mahānadīm
16 Videha	Mahāgrāma	10 Gomatī
17 Puṇḍra	17 Puṇḍra	11 Purvā Sarasvatī
18 Vaṅga	19 Aṅga	Sumbha
20 Lauhitya	21 Kośakārāṇāṃ Bhūmi	16 Videha
21 Kośakārāṇām	23 Rajatakaram Bhūmim	15 Malaya
paṭṭanam		
22 Mandara	22 Mandara	13 Kāśī
24 Kirātas	Karṇapravaraṇaḥ	14 Kosala
Aṣṭakarṇikas	Oṣṭakarṇakaḥ	12 Magadha
25 Kirāta Dvīpavāsinaḥ	Ghoralohamukhaḥ	Daṇḍakūla
26 Jaladvīpa	Ekapādakaḥ	18 Vaṅga
* * * *	Puruṣādakas	19 Aṅga
28 Sibira	24 Kirātas	20 Lauhitya
29 Kālodaka	Āmamīnāsanaḥ	21 Kośakārāṇaṃ Paṭṭanam
30 Mahānāda	25 Kirāta	23 Kanakakaram
	Dvīpavāsinaḥ	
31 Lauhitya sāgara	Naravyāghraḥ	22 Mandara
32 Suparṇasya gṛha	26 Yavadvīpa	24 Kirātas
33 Gośṛṅga Parvata	27 Suvarṇarūpyakadvīpa	Ugrakarṇikas
34 Kṣīroda	* * * *	Kālamukhas
35 Rajata Parvata	28 Śiśira	Parakas
36 Sudarśanā Nalinī	Śoṇa-raktajālam	Karbukas
37 Ghṛtoda	Samudradvīpaḥ	26 Jaladvīpa
38 Vaḍavāmukha	30 Mahānada	27 Suvarṇarūpyakam
39 Jātarūpa śilā	31 Lohita sāgara	Gaṇadvīpam
40 Udaya Parvata	32 Vainateyagṛha	* * * *
41 Saumanasa śṛṅga	34 Kṣīroda	28 Śiśira Parvata
* * * *	Śveto ṛṣabha Parvata	29 Kālodaka
	36 Sudarśana	31 Lohitam Sāgaram
	Jalodam Sāgaram	Kūṭaśālmalim
	38 Vaḍavāmukham	32 Vainateya gṛham
	39 Jātarūpa śilā	33 Gośṛṅga
	Ananta's abode	34 Kṣīroda
	40 Udaya Parvata	35 Rajata Parvata
	41 Saumanasa śṛṅga	

GE IV, 40, 1-68 (continued)

36 Sudarśanā Nalinī
37 Ghṛtodam
38 Vaḍavāmukha
39 Jātarūpa śilā
40 Udayo deva Parvata
41 Saumanasam
Sandarśanadvīpa

* * * *

THE ROUTE TO THE SOUTH

NW IV, 33, 10-67

1 Vindhya
2 Narmadā
3 Mekhalā
4 Utkala
Jambumatī nadī
Candravatī nadī
6 Vidarbha
7 Ṛṣika
8 Māhiṣaka
9 Vegavatī nadī
Śaka
Kuṇinda
10 Kāliṅga
11 Daśārṇa
12 Kaukura
Haiman
Kadarān
13 Daṇḍakāraṇya
14 Godāvarī nadī
15 Kāveri
Cauṇḍrān
17 Puṇḍrān
18 Keralān
Kuru
20 Malaya
15 Kāveri
22 Kapāṭam Pāṇḍyānām
island
23 Mahendra
island
24 Vidyutvān Parvata

Mālyavān Parvata
25 Kuñjara Parvata
27 Agastyabhavana
28 Bhogavatī
mountain
Triśṛṅga
30 Saumanas
32 Vaivasvata's abode

BE IV, 41, 8-45

1 Vindhya
2 Narmadā
14 Godāvarī
5 Kṛṣṇaveṇī mahānadī
3 Mekhalā
Daśārṇanagara
Avanti
6 Vidarbha
Uṣṭikān
8 Māhiṣaka
Matsya
10 Kāliṅga
Kauśika
13 Daṇḍakāraṇya
14 Godāvarī
Āndhrān
17 Puṇḍrān
19 Cola
21 Pāṇḍya
18 Kerala
16 Ayomukha Parvata
15 Kāveri
20 Malaya
27 Agastyabhavana
Tamraparṇi nadī
22 Pāṇḍyānām Kavāṭa
23 Mahendra
island
Puṣpitaka
24 Vaidyuta Parvata
25 Kuñjara Parvata

27 Agastyabhavana
28 Bhogavatī
29 Ṛṣabha Parvata
Candanavana
31 Pitṛloka
32 Yamasya Rājadhāni

GE IV, 41, 10-71

1 Vindhya
2 Narmadā
Vetravatī
5 Kṛṣṇaveṇī mahānadī
Bahumatī
3 Mekhalā
4 Utkala
11 Daśārṇa
12 Kukura
Antaravedī
Bhoja
21 Pāṇḍya
20 Malaya
9 Vegavatī
6 Vidarbha
7 Ṛṣika
8 Māhiṣaka
Aśmaka
Pulinda
10 Kāliṅga
13 Daṇḍakāraṇya
14 Godāvarī
Oḍrān
Drāviḍa
17 Puṇḍra
19 Cola
18 Kerala
16 Ayomukhaḥ Parvataḥ
15 Kāveri
Mahāgrahaduṣṭodam
22 Kapāṭaguptam
Pāṇḍyānām
island
23 Mahendra
island
Dakṣiṇām Lavaṇālayam
island
24 Vidyutvān Parvata
Uśirabīja
Yamasya Uttaraparvata
26 Kuñjara Parvata
27 Agastyabhavana
28 Bhogavatī
29 Vṛṣabha Parvata
Tṛṇāṅkāśrama
30 Saumanasa nadī
31 Pitṛloka
32 Vaivasvata rājadhāni

THE ROUTE TO THE WEST

NW IV, 35, 5-69

Viśālam Paścimām
Purīm
1 Surāṣṭra
2 Vāhlika
3 Sūdrābhīra
4 Kekayas
5 Sindhu
6 Sauvīra
Mālava
7 Sindhu-sāgarayoḥ
saṅgama
Mahāhemagiri
8 Marudhanva
8 Maru
3 Śūdrābhīrālaya
Strīrājya
9 Yavanānām Purāṇi
Pañcanada
10 Kaśmīramaṇḍala
11 Pāradānām Purāṇi
12 Takṣaśilā
Śākala
13 Puṣkarāvatī
Āraṭṭa
14 Gandhāra
8 Marubhūmi
4 Kekaya
15 Varāha Parvata
16 Prāgjyotiṣam Puram
Suṣena Parvata
7 Meru

* * *

BE IV, 42, 6-51

1 Saurāṣṭra
2 Bāhlīka
Candracitrān
Jānapadān
Ketakakhaṇḍān
8 Maruprāyāsthali
Śiśira śilā
Murucipattanam

Jaṭāpura
Avanti
Aṅgalepa
7 Sindhu-sāgara saṅgama
Somagiri
Gandharvānām purāṇi
Vajra Mahāgiri
18 Cakravān Parvata
15 Varāha Parvata
16 Prāgjyotiṣām Nagaram
Sarvasauvarṇa Parvata
60,000 mountains
Meru

* * *

GE IV, 43, 5-61

1 Surāṣṭra
2 Vāhlīka
3 Abhīra
Prabhasādīni tīrthāni
Dvāravatīm
Mārīcipattanam
6 Sauvīra
Aṅgaloka

Kolūka
4 Kaikeyān
5 Sindhu-Sauvīra
Kāntāragirayas
Ānarta
7 Sindhu-sāgara saṅgama
Phenagiri
Sindhoḥ tīrthāni
8 Maru
3 Śūrābhīrālayaḥ
9 Yavanānām purāṇi
11 Pahlava vāsa
10 Kāśmīramaṇḍala
Śamīpīluvanāni
12 Takṣaśilā
13 Puṣkarāvatī
Śālvādīn
14 Gandhāradeśa
8 Marubhūmi
4 Kaikeya
Paścimam samudram
18 Cakravān Parvata
15 Varāha Parvata
Śailendram Kāñcanam
Sumedharatna Parvata
17 Meru

* * *

THE ROUTE TO THE NORTH

NW IV, 36, 14-130

1 Matsya
2 Pulinda
3 Śūrasena
Prasthakān
4 Madrakān
5 Kuru
Kekaya
6 Gandhāra
7 Yavana
8 Cīna
Pauṇḍra
Mālava
10 Vāhlīka
11 Ṛṣika
Rāmaṭatarigaṇa
8 Cīna
12 Paramacīna

BE IV, 32, 13-56

Mleccha
2 Pulinda
3 Śūrasena
Prasthala
Bharata
5 Kuru
4 Madraka
14 Kāmboja
7 Yavana
9 Śakānām Pattanāni
16 Himavantam
Lodhrapadmakakhaṇḍa
Somāśrama
19 Kālam sānum
21 Hemagarbha mahāgiri
20 Sudarśana Parvata
Devasakha Parvata

GE IV, 44, 12-124

1 Matsya
2 Pulinda
3 Śūrasena
Pracara
4 Madraka
5 Kuru
6 Gandharva
7 Yavana
9 Śaka
Oḍra
18 Pāradān
10 Vāhlīka
11 Ṛṣika
Paurava
Kiṅkara
8 Cina
12 Aparacīna

NW IV, 36, 14-130	BV IV, 32,13-56	GE IV, 44, 12-124 (continued)
13 Tuṣāra	Kāntāra	13 Tukhāra
Varkhara	22 Kailāsa	Barbara
Kaṭaka	22 Kuverabhavana	14 Kāmbhoja
Aśvala	25 Krauñca giri	15 Darada
Jāla	26 Mānasa	16 Himavantam
16 Kāmbhoja	27 Mayasya bhavana	17 Kirāta
15 Darada	27 Mainaka	Taṅkana
16 Himavantam	28 Vaikhānasa saras	Paśupāla
17 Kirāta	Sārvabhaumi	19 Kālam Śiloccayam
18 Pahlava	32 Uttarakuru	Tāmrākāran
19 Kāla Parvata	37 Uttaram Payasām nidhi	21 Hemagarbha giri
20 Sudarśana	36 Somagiri	20 Sudarśana
22 Kailāsa	* * *	22 Kailāsa(Kuverabhavana)
23 Triśṛṅga		25 Krauñca Parvata
24 Sarayū		27 Mainaka Parvata
25 Krauñca		Aśvamukhīnām niketas
26 Mānasa		28 Vaikhānasa saras
Gandhamādana		23 Triśṛṅga
* * *		24 Rudrasya saṃsthāna
27 Maināka		29 Mandara
28 Vaikhānasa saras		30 Gaṅgā
29 Mandara		37 Uttaram samudram
30 Ākāśa Gaṅgā		Śaravana
Kauśikī nadī		31 Śailodā
Vaitaraṇī		32 Uttarakuru
Lohitodā		33 Mandākinī
Bahuketu		34 Caitraratham vanam
31 Śailodā		35 Kṣīravahā nadī
32 Uttarakuru		Pāyasakardama hradās
33 Mandākinī nadī		36 Somagiri
34 Caitraratham vanam		* * *
35 Kṣīravāhā		
36 Somagiri		
Gandharvabhavana		
Śikhasthana		
* * *		

§ 56. Comparing these lists, one may observe that the three recensions include material of three different stages, the GE representing the latest. Nothing more than a faint idea of the direction in which certain countries are located can be seen; it is, however, not possible to rely on them for the reconstruction of the geography of ancient India, not to speak of Asia. For example, the usual identification of Yavadvīpa (NW and GE Jaladvīpa) with Java[1] becomes untenable when it is taken into consideration that the Rāmāyaṇa specifically mentions it to be within Jambudvīpa. But certain geographical conditions described in these accounts are of importance in estimating the knowledge of physical geography of the ancient Indians. For instance, the extreme north beyond India is described as a land, where there is no sun but still its light is found; *sa tu deśo visūryo'pi tasya bhāsā prakāśate*.[2] Another interesting account is that of Sampāti's flight into the Stratosphere.[3]

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1 Das: AGA p. 56. For identifications see Das: AGA pp. 52-68.

2 NW IV, 36, 123

3 NW IV, 53, 9-23

C. Geographical Data of the Uttara Kāṇḍa

§ 57. The Uttarakāṇḍa is no doubt a late addition to the Rāmāyaṇa and as such its geographical data should refer to India of a later period. This Kāṇḍa refers to some places already mentioned in the earlier kāṇḍas; Sarayū is known to be a quarter of a yojana from Ayodhyā.[1] Rāma performs his Aśvamedha sacrifice in Naimiṣa forest on the bank of Gomatī;[2] and Gaṅgā, Narmadā[3] and Yamunā[4] are alluded to in a number of places. Vālmīki's hermitage is located on the bank of Tamasā[5] and Lakṣmaṇa is said to have spent the night on the bank of Keśinī on his way back after leaving Sītā in the forest.[6] Also mentioned are Kekaya, Kailāsa and Vindhya[7].

§ 58. In the legends incorporated in this kāṇḍa a number of places are referred to as kingdoms of various kings. Balhīka was the kingdom of Ilā, the son of Kardana Prajāpati;[8] and he became the king of Pratiṣṭhāna in Madhyadeśa.[9] Daṇḍa who ruled from Madhumant had a kingdom which spread between Vindhya and Śaivāla.[10] Sudeva was the king of Vidarbha.[11] Sumeru was ruled by Kesarī.[12] and Kāśi, with its city Vārāṇasī[13] was known as the territory of Pratardana Kāśipati,[14] of Puru, who ruled from the city of Pratiṣṭhāna[15] and of Purūravas.[16] As a king, who surrendered to Rāvaṇa, is mentioned Purūravas of Gayā[17] while Marutta of Uśīrabīja[18] and the Haihaya king, Arjuna of Mahiṣmatī,[19] were also challenged by him. And Śailūṣa ruled over Gandhāraviṣaya which was on both banks of Sindhu.[20]

§ 59. Further Yadu is said to have procreated his thousand sons in Krauñcavana;[21] Nṛga gave away cattle to Brahmans at Puṣkara[22] and the Brahman who lost his cattle found them at Kanakhala.[23] Śambūka practised penance on the northern side of Śaivāla while Rāvaṇa is said to have repaired to Gokarṇa for the same purpose and Rāvaṇa's brothers lived in Śleṣmātakavana.

§ 60. While Balhīka is modern Balkh, Pratiṣṭhāna in Madhyadeśa where Aila Purūravas ruled is identified with Jushi, opposite to Allahabad across the Ganges, which is still called Pratiṣṭhāpura.[24]

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1 BE VII, 110, 1
2 BE VII, 91, 15
3 BE VII, 31, 26 and 32
4 BE VII, 60, 5
5 BE VII, 45, 17-18
6 BE VII, 51, 29
7 BE VII, 100, 1; VII, 11, 40 ff; VII, 31, 14
8 BE VII, 87, 3
9 BE VII, 90, 21-22
10 BE VII, 80, 7; VII, 79; 16, VII, 81, 18-19.
11 BE VII, 78, 3
12 BE VII, 35, 19
13 BE VII, 38, 17
14 BE VII, 38, 15
15 BE VII, 59, 19
16 BE VII, 56, 25
17 BE VII, 19, 5
18 BE VII, 18, 2
19 BE VII, 31, 9
20 BE VII, 100, 10-11
21 BE VII, 59, 20.
22 BE VII, 53, 8.
23 BE VII, 53, 11.
24 Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 159.

Śaivāla is supposed to be Rāmagiri or Rāmtek mountain, 24 miles to the north of Nagpur, and the country between Vindhya and this was Daṇḍakāraṇya of which Madhumant, now unidentifiable, was the capital. Sumeru may be regarded as the modern Rudra Himālaya in Garwal or as the Hindukush mountain—the two mountains identifiable with Sumeru; an accurate identification is not possible because of the lack of data as well as of the mythological context in which it is cited. Kāśi and Vārāṇasī are, on the other hand, easily identified with modern Benares. Gayā, referred to here, may be modern Gayā;[1] it is associated with Buddhism because the Buddha attained his Buddhahood in its vicinity. Uśīrabīja is the name of a mountain, mentioned also in the Mahābhārata,[2] but, is unidentified.

§ 61. Mahiṣmatī is modern Mahesvara or Mahesh, on the right bank of the Narbadā, forty miles to the south of Indore;[3] it was the capital of the Haihaya kingdom which includes modern Khandesh, parts of Aurangabad and South Malwa. Although its king Kartavīrya was regarded as a contemporary of Rāma in so far as he was challenged by Rāvaṇa and killed by Paraśurāma, his kingdom finds no mention in the itinerary of Rāma just as Vidarbha, to the west of it is not alluded to. It appears that Rāma avoided both kingdoms and resorted to the vast tract of the jungle between them. Although the forests Krauñcavana and Śleṣmātakavana cannot be identified for certain—the former may be the same as Krauñcāṭavi or Krauñcālaya—, Puskara and Gokarṅa have been already shown (II § 14) as places of pilgrimage in Southern India.

§ 62. By far the most interesting of the geographical accounts of the Uttarakāṇḍa are those on the cities built by Rāma, his brothers and grandsons. Bharata after conquering Gandhāra instituted his two sons, Takṣa in Takṣaśilā and Puṣkala in Puṣkalāvatī.[4] Śatrughna killed tyrannical Lavaṇa and occupied his city Madhupurī or Madhurā;[5] in an invokation to the gods he desired that the city is rendered "full of heroic armies" (Śūrasenā)[6] and this appears to be a popular explanation of the name Śūrasena for the country, whose capital Madhurā was. The successors of Śatrughna shared the kingdom and Subāhu ruled from Madhurā while Śatrughāti had Vaidiśa as the seat of government. Rāma built for Kuśa the city of Kuśāvatī on the Vindhya mountain and Lakṣmaṇa's sons, Aṅgada and Candraketu were appointed rulers of western and northern Kārupatha and the two cities Aṅgadīyā purī and Malla of Mallabhūmi were built by Rāma for them. And finally we hear that Rāma's successor in Ayodhyā abandoned Ayodhyā and established Śrāvastī as the capital of Kosala.

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1 Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 64.
2 Monier-Williams: Skt.Dict., s.v.
3 Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 120.
4 BE VII, 101, 11.
5 BE VII, 68, 3.
6 BE VII, 70, 6.

§ 63. Gandhāra, which according to the Rāmāyaṇa was on both sides of Indus, extended along the Kabul river as far as Kunar;[1] and Takṣaśilā is modern Taxila while Puṣkalāvatī may be identified with "Aṣṭanagara or Haṣṭanagara (Charsaddah) eighteen miles north of Peshawar."[2] The antiquity of these two cities is clear from the references to them in the ancient literature. It appears that their association with Rāma's nephews, Takṣa and Puṣkala, after whom they are named is an attempt to explain the names; the historicity of the statement may not be doubted altogether. But the creation of eponymous persons is a phenomenon which should not be lost sight of. The figures Takṣa and Puṣkara serve no purpose in the Rāmāyaṇa other than in accounting for the names of these two cities. Further, it is interesting to observe that the Buddhist tradition gives different accounts of their origin; Takṣaśilā is said to represent the place where Bhadraśilā was decapitated and Puṣkalāvatī is explained as a later form for Utpalāvatī in the Divyāvadānas.[3] Madhurā, which is the same as Mathurā or Maholi, which is five miles to the south-west of modern Mathurā,[4] evinces its antiquity in being connected with old Kṛṣṇa legends and the fact that it is not named after a hero of the Rāmāyaṇa is also worthy of note. Vaidiśa is modern Bhilsa in Malwa in the kingdom of Bhopal, on Vetravati about twenty-six miles to the north-east of Bhopal.[5] Kuśāvatī, which is the same as Kuśapura or Kuśabhavana pura and identifiable with modern Sultanpur,[6] is said to be named after Kuśa. Kārupatha or Kārapatha is identified by Nundo Lal Dey with "Kārābagh or Kālābagh or Bhagan, as it is now called on the right or west bank of the Indus, at the foot of the Salt Range."[7] The identification of Śrāvastī has been already discussed. (II § 2).

§ 64. This account of the partition of Rāma's empire shows that he was the ruler of the Gandhāra and adjacent land on the west of Indus, Mathurā and Kosala. The Gandhāra region and Mathurā had been acquired through conquest while Kośala was inherited from Daśaratha; it is quite evident that his empire did not comprise the whole region between Kosala and Gandhāra. It is worth noting that the inherited kingdom was divided between Rāma's sons while the conquered areas were given in charge to his brothers and nephews. Imperial expansion, as it was understood at the time of Bimbisāra, is not evident in these accounts. As it is not possible to discredit the historicity of the Uttarakāṇḍa in spite of the fact that it is a later addition to the Rāmāyaṇa,

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1 Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 60.
2 *loc.cit.*, p. 163. & Cunningham: CAGI pp.56 f.
3 Nundo Lal Dey: GD pp.200 and 163.
4 Nundo Lal Dey: GD p.116.
5 Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 35.
6 Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 111. Cunningham: *loc. cit.*, p.459.
7 Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 92.

we may trace in it the state of India towards the latter part of Rāma's reign and just after it. Even here the conclusion that the geographical conditions refer to a pre-Buddhistic era is irresistible.

D. People of the Ramāyaṇa

§ 65. Besides the peoples, whose settlements seem to have acquired by the time reflected in the Rāmāyaṇa specific geographical limits and whose countries have been already discussed earlier, there are a few others mentioned in our epic. The most important of them are the Aryans, to which category the heroes of the Rāmāyaṇa belong. Kosalas, to whom Daśaratha, Kausalyā, Rāma and his brothers belong, were of Aryan origin[1] while Kekayas from whom Kaikeyī hailed and Videhas, whose princess, Sītā, Rāma married, too, belong to the same stock. But it is very rarely—and even then rather ambiguously that they are referred to as Aryans in the Rāmāyaṇa. The two statements that Ayodhyā was full of *Āryas*[2] and that its "*sabhā*" consisted of Āryas[3] seem to contain a faint ethnological hint; yet the Aryans are looked upon as superior to the others in so far as their actions are expected to be of a higher order than those of the rest. For instance the people of Ayodhyā express their utter bewilderment at how an *Ārya* could banish his son;[4] and Jaṭāyu tells Rāvaṇa that an *Ārya* cannot live long in the abode of evil-minded ones.[5] Besides, the heroes of the epic are praised as resorting to the conduct of the *Āryas;* their frequent epithets are *Āryaśīla* and *Āryavṛtta*.[6] Moreover, the elders are addressed as *Ārya* or *Āryā*. Not only do the brothers call Rāma as *Ārya* throughout,[7] but Rāma refers to his father as *Pitṛ-Ārya*.[8] Sumitrā, Bharata and Sītā address Kausalyā as *Āryā*;[9] similarly Sugrīva describes Rāma as *Ārya-Rāghava*[10] and Hanumat addresses Sītā as *Āryā*.[11]

§ 66. The term, *Anārya*, is throughout used as the opposite of Ārya not only in its ethnological sense but also in its moral aspect. When the Rākṣasas are referred to as *Anārya*[12] it may be considered as signifying their race but the frequent application of the word in a derogatory sense makes these contexts somewhat ambiguous. Because none of the other non-Aryan tribes are called *Anārya* anywhere in the epic, we may regard these, too, as merely disparaging statements. Kaikeyī is reproached by both Daśaratha and her son Bharata as *Anārya*[13] and

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1 Cf CHI, I p.190 and Law: AIT I. p. 36.
2 NW I, 5, 11.
3 NW II, 92, 1.
4 NW II, 36, 13. Cf. also IV, 47, 7,
5 NW III, 55. 9.
6 NW II, 54, 7; II, 36, 28: V, 11, 5; V, 35, 52; II, 128, 6.
7 NW II, 23,12; II, 76, 7; II, 81, 3 etc.
8 NW II, 119, 25.
9 NW II, 68, 4; II, 83, 2; II, 42, 8.
10 NW VI, 26, 41.
11 NW V, 67, 29 & V, 25, 10.
12 NW III, 1, 20; V, 21 4-5; III, 23, 19; V, 17, 23.
13 NW II, 37, 2; II, 105, 27 etc.

Daśaratha, Kausalyā and Sītā in fits of remorse call themselves *Anārya*.[1] Interesting are the two references where Indrajit, a Rākṣasa, blames his uncle Vibhīṣaṇa as *Anārya*[2] and where the Rākṣasas call Sītā by the same name;[3] base acts are often qualified by *Anārya*.[4]

§ 67. The use of these two words in their non-ethnological sense is important because they show how the superiority of the Aryans as an ethnic group, to begin with, has persisted down the ages and how the term which indicated the superior people came to signify anything noble; the same is the case with the term *Anārya*. Though it was only an epithet to distinguish the non-Aryans from the Aryans it had acquired a derogatory sense. When the Rākṣasas use it as a term of disparagement, we may regard it as an imposition of the author's views on the situations of the story and that is an important factor which should be borne in mind in evaluating the data of the Rāmāyaṇa. Whatever be the situation dealt with in the epic it is the North Indian author who works out its details and as such the conditions reflected will be North Indian more often than not.

§ 68. To deal with the data found in that part of the Rāmāyaṇa, which is generally regarded as early, the most important tribe, which Rāma met in his wanderings, is that of the *Niṣādas* who were non-Aryan as their complexion (*sukṛṣṇavarṇāḥ*) shows.[5] They lived in the forest (*vanacarān*)[6] although a city of theirs by the name of Śṛṅgaverapura is mentioned. They appear to have been hunters and fishermen because the *Upāyana* they offered Bharata consisted of fish, meat and honey.[7] They seem to have used boats for fishing as we hear that they supplied Rāma boats to cross the Ganges.[8] There is no doubt that the Niṣādas were associated with the Aryans and thereby had absorbed much of the Aryan culture. From the Rāmāyaṇa it appears that they were treated by the Aryan princes with cordiality. Rāma embraces Guha,[9] the king of the Niṣādas, although the latter salutes him with clasped hands (*Añjali*).[10] This attitude of submission on the part of Guha may be explained with reference to a statement of his to Rāma, "This whole earth is yours; we are your servants and you our Master. May you rule our kingdom well."[11] This shows clearly that the Niṣādas were vassals of Ayodhyā.

§ 69. The Niṣādas form one of the tribes which were known to the Aryans very early. They are referred to in the later Saṃhitās and the Brāhmaṇas and for the performance of the *Viśvajit* sacrifice

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1 NW II,37, 18; II, 72, 4; V, 20, 27.
2 NW IV, 59, 28;
3 NW V, 21, 3.
4 NW V, 95, 4; VI, 45, 28; III, 10, 23; III, 62, 17 etc.
5 NW II, 50 27.
6 NW II, 95, 1& 8.
7 NW II, 96, 1.
8 NW II, 53, 5.
9 NW II, 51, 12 & 15.
10 NW II, 51, 8.
11 NW II, 51, 15.

dwelling in a Niṣāda settlement was a necessity.[1] Although the Manusmṛti explains the origin of the Niṣādas as the resultant of a mixed marriage between a Brahman and a Śūdra woman,[2] their non-Aryan origin cannot be altogether doubted. Macdonell and Keith after examining the references in the Vedic literature come to the conclusion that *Niṣāda*, "seems to denote not so much a particular tribe, but to be the general term for non-Aryan tribes who were not under Aryan control, as the Śūdras were."[3] In the Pāli Canon the Niṣādas (*Pāli Nesāda*) are enumerated among the low castes in the formula "*Caṇḍālakulaṃ vā nesādakulaṃ vā veṇakulaṃ vā rathakārakulaṃ vā pukkusakulaṃ vā*.[4] Thus a problem of no meagre interest is to ascertain whether the Niṣādas were a tribe as the older texts imply or a caste as the Buddhist Suttas and the later Brahmanical works state.[5]

§ 70. However, it appears that the word *Niṣāda* signifies first of all a tribe, essentially non-Aryan, whose main occupations had been hunting, fishing and honey-gathering; this tribe seems to have settled down in various parts of the country north of the Vindhya range. The Mahābhārata[6] knows of a settlement in Western Vindhya which seems to be the one referred to by Rudradāman in his Junagarh inscription.[7] The Rāmāyaṇa knows a similar settlement to the north of the Ganges. Secondly, the word Niṣāda had been used to mean a low caste; at the outset it must have been applied to the hunters whose status in society was very low on account of their dealings with carcases. This state is also reflected in the Rāmāyaṇa when Mahodaya is cursed to become a Niṣāda who is addicted to killing (*prāṇātipātaniratah*)[8]. The Brahmanical explanation as a mixed caste represents a further development of the sense of the word.

§ 71. The Vānaras who played an important role as the allies of Rāma in rescuing Sītā have been the subject of much discussion; attempts have been usually made to identify them with the various aboriginal tribes of Peninsular India. But in the Rāmāyaṇa the word appears to represent a type of beings who are in form animals but who are still capable of the deeds of men. For instance Sugrīva is called "*Śākhāmṛga*,"[9] "*Plavagādhipa*",[10] "*Kapi*",[11] and "*Haripuṅgava*."[12] All these, as "*Vānara*", are names for a monkey; when Sugrīva tells Rāma that he is only an ordinary Vānara (*Vānaraḥ prākṛtaḥ*) it is rather probable that his animal nature was indicated.[13] Clear references to the

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1 Law: AIT II pp. 61 ff.
2 Manusmṛti: X, 8.
3 Macdonell & Keith: *Vedic Index*, I, p 453.
4 Anguttara Nikāya (P.T.S.) p. 85; Vinaya IV p. 6.
5 Cf. Bose: SREI, II, pp. 448-449.
6 Cf. Law: AIT II p. 62.
7 Sircar: *Select Inscriptions*, p. 172.
8 NW I, 55, 21-22.
9 NW III, 82, 59.
10 NW IV, 1, 1.
11 NW IV, 1, 2.
12 NW IV, 1, 10.
13 GE IV, 6, 8.

animal nature of the Vānaras are found in the reproach of Rāma by Vālin and Rāma's explanation. Vālin blames Rāma for killing him who is only a wild animal, living on fruit and roots (*vanacarā mṛgā mūla-phalāśinaḥ*)[1]. Rāma gives as his excuse for killing Vālin without challenging him first that the royal practice of hunting permits the killing of animals; thus he implies that the Vānaras were animals. Rāvaṇa, too, refers to them as animals (*tiryagyonigaṇa*)[2] and the Vānaras have tails which Rāvaṇa observes are their most desirable ornament.[3] Their distinction from men is stressed when Sītā expresses her astonishment as regards the alliance between men and the Vānaras[4] and when Rāvaṇa reckoned Rāma to be the only man in the army.[5] But being capable of changing their form at will (*Kāmarūpinaḥ*), they are said to acquire human form[6] and Sugrīva appears before Rāma in the guise of a mendicant.[7]

§ 72. In spite of these they resemble men in many of their deeds. Sugrīva wears ornaments (*pralambīkṛtabhūṣanaḥ*)[8] and he is regarded as intelligent and learned.[9] Suṣena is a physician of great dexterity and Nala is an engineer who undertakes to build the causeway in the sea. Hanumat, likewise, is capable of speaking in Sanskrit like a Brahman and he is a clever ambassador who is well versed in polity. As such it appears that the author or the authors of the Rāmāyaṇa did not visualize the Vānaras merely as a species of animals. They were conceived as a tribe of people, although the tendency to emphasize the supernatural and cater to the popular taste had resulted in their being represented in a half mythical and half-human form.

§ 73. However, the familiarity of the Rāmāyaṇa with primitive tribes of India is evident in the description of the Vānaras. The glorious account of the city of Kiṣkindhā and the sports of Sugrīva in his harem is to be regarded as a clear imposition of the North Indian conditions on the less known primitive tribes. But on the other hand certain customs like the remarriage of widows show that some special traits of the non-Aryan races are known to the Rāmāyaṇa, for instance, they are said to live in caves.[10] The epic is most realistic in describing the modes of warfare and the weapons of the Vānaras. Their army was strong as much as those of the Rākṣasas and the Piśācas[11] and its weapons were teeth, nails, stones and trees.[12] These are generally the missiles of the primitive tribes

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1 NW IV, 16, 59.
2 NW VI, 42, 12.
3 NW V, 49, 3.
4 NW V, 29, 2.
5 NW VI, 12, 4.
6 NW VI, 108, 39; VI, 13, 30; GE, IV, 4, 10.
7 NW IV, 4, 14.
8 NW IV, 8, 60.
9 NW III, 78, 48-49.
10 NW IV, 8, 73-74.
11 NW VI, 3, 16.
12 NW V, 32, 39; V, 36, 48; V, 67, 26; IV, 24, 14, & 20; VI, 90, 24.

and in the Rāmāyaṇa itself the distinction in weapons among the Aryans, the Vānaras and the Rākṣasas is very clear. Equally primitive tribes were their allies, the Ṛkṣas and the Golāṅgūlas[1]—either two totemic peoples as the Vānaras may have been or mythological creations in the same category as the animal-like Vānaras.

§ 74. Many writers have attempted to identify the Vānaras with various primitive tribes of Central India. Still there had been others like D. C. Sen who regarded the Vānaras as demi-gods.[2] Hiralal believed that they were human beings and explained the references to their tails as "not totally a myth" because primitive tribes like the Nāgas have even today an ornamental tail.[3] K. S. Ramaswami Sastri surmises that they "must have been an Aryan colony which settled down in South India and were cut off from their brothers who were living in North India."[4] This theory is undoubtedly untenable because the accounts in the Rāmāyaṇa show clearly that they had far more primitive traits than Aryan traits in their social conditions. Weber's theory that they were aborigines of Deccan who had been brought completely within the influence of Aryan culture[5] is more acceptable. While Monier Williams considers them to be the wild aborigines of the Vindhya and neighbouring hills who were "poetically converted into monkeys",[6] Pargiter thinks that they were a Dravidian tribe;[7] as a reason for his conjecture he demonstrates how Hanumat is a Sanskritization of the Tamil word *āṇ-manti* meaning a male monkey.[8]

§ 75. Others associate Vānaras with existing tribes: V.R.R. Dikshitar regards them to be a ferocious community more akin to the Negritos.[9] G. Ramadas argues that they are the Savaras of Ganjam—one of whose tribes is called *Arsi* or *Arisi* (=monkey) by themselves and *Lambo Lanjiya* (long-tailed) by the Oriyas.[10] Dikshitar cites the Bellary District Gazetteer II, where it is said that the wandering Lambadis claim Vālin and Sugrīva as their primitive ancestors.[11] Hiralal agrees with Sarat Chandra Roy that the Oraons were the Vānaras of the Rāmāyaṇa[12] and Cust identifies the Vānaras with the Kolarian races of Central India.[13] Most of these aborigines differ very little among themselves; and also none of them have had fixed abodes during the long period which intervenes between the Rāmāyaṇa and the present day. As such no definite identification is possible, nor is it necessary for the

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1 NW VI, 101, 19.
2 Sen: BRS p. 35.
3 Hiralal: *Jha Com. Vol.*, pp. 160-161.
4 K. S. Ramaswami Sastri: 1C, V, p. 195.
5 Weber: IA, I p. 121.
6 Monier-Williams: IW p. 311 f.
7 Pargiter: AIHT p. 278.
8 Pargiter: *loc. cit.*
9 Dikshitar: *Transactions of the All-India Ori. Conf.* VII p. 251.
10 Ramdas: *Man in India*, V. pp. 41-50.
11 Dikshitar: *op. cit.*, p. 252.
12 Hiralal: *Jha Com. Vol.*, p. 160.
13 Cust: LOE p. 65.

interpretation of the epic. We may, however, conclude that they were a tribe of aborigines — probably totemistic — who resided in the neighbourhood of Ṛṣyamūka and Kiṣkindhā; they were primitive but were somewhat amenable to Aryan influence which came to them through the sages who established hermitages in their land. Thus the Aryan influence seems to have been more on their culture than on the material civilization.

§ 76. The *Rākṣasas* who were the enemies of both the Aryans and the Vānaras occupy an important position among the tribes mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa. It appears that the word Rākṣasa has in the epic a derogatory sense; it is enumerated as representing a demoniacal type along with the Piśācas and the Pretas.[1] Bharata abuses his mother, Kaikeyī, with the words Rākṣasī[2] and "*Jātām ghoreṇa rākṣasā.*"[3] Yayāti, too, upbraids his son Yadu as a Rākṣasa and curses that he should produce Rākṣasas.[4]

§ 77. The Rākṣasas are also known as Yātudhānas[5] and also as Pulastyas.[6] They are described as *Anāryas*[7] with protruding teeth and ugly mouths,[8] of evil complexion[9] like a black cloud,[10] of low families,[11] and immoral.[12] One of them seen by Rāma in the Dandaka forest is described as *Puruṣādam* (cannibalistic), *Vakranāsam* (of crooked nose), *virūpākṣam* (of deformed eyes), *dīptāsyam*, *dīptajihvam* (of a shining mouth and tongue) and *nirṇatodaram* (pot-bellied).[13] They wore bracelets, necklaces and other ornaments[14] and could appear attractive enough as did Śūrpanakhā for Lakṣmaṇa to address her *Kanakavarṇiṇi* and *Varavarṇiṇi*.[15]

§ 78. A fair idea of the physical form of the Rākṣasas may be derived from the descriptions of Rāvaṇa. Although he is said to have possessed ten heads and twenty hands,[16] the Rāmāyaṇa is not consistent in depicting him so. In fact he is described also as one-headed.[17] The ten heads and twenty hands are the creations of popular imagination and the predilection of the epic-authors for the supernatural has strengthened such fancies still more. Rāvaṇa was dark in complexion like a rain cloud[18] and like a mountain of collyrium; he had a broad forehead, red eyes, strong arms, and a wide chest. His body was stout as that of a bull and his teeth were like those of a lion. He had attractive limbs

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1 NW II, 36, 22.
2 NW II, 80, 11.
3 NW II, 79, 21.
4 BE VII, 59. 14f.
5 NW III, 28, 6; V, 4, 29; V, 70, 34 etc.
6 NW III, 28, 28.
7 NW III, 1, 20.
8 NW III, 1, 19.
9 GE III, 23, 14 & NW III, 27, 9.
10 NW III, 27, 9.
11 GE III, 23, 15.
12 GE III, 23, 14.
13 NW III, 5, 6-7.
14 GE III, 50, 20.
15 NW III, 23, 9-12.
16 NW III, 36, 5.
17 NW VI, 91, 10.
18 NW III, 36 6.

(*citrāṅga*) and was hairy. His hair was dazzling and black. He wore a red garment and ear-ornaments of smelt gold.[1] He is also said to have been a rough king of little intelligence and unrestrained sense organs.[2] The Rākṣasas are described as dwelling in palaces and mansions of the city of Laṅkā[3] where they were living in luxury — well versed in sports and addicted to sensual pleasures and social festivities.[4]

§ 79. The Rākṣasas appear to have considered themselves to be superior to men, with whom a clear distinction is made regularly. It is obvious that they regarded themselves to be altogether different from human beings.[5] They were clever warriors. Daśaratha states that the Rākṣasas are elusive in warfare;[6] and among their powers are the ability to acquire any form[7] and go anywhere they wish.[8] Further, Virādha is capable of carrying Sītā and rising up to the sky.[9] Their powers were immense and hence they were a terror to the world. They were most inimical to the Brahman sages and the ascetics whom they killed and whose sacrifices they obstructed.[10] Moreover they were cannibals, and are called in the Rāmāyaṇa *Manuṣyādāḥ*,[11] *Rudhirāśanāḥ*,[12] *Māṃsaśoṇitabhojanāḥ*,[13] *Jitakāśī*[14] and *Piśitāśanaḥ*.[15] Virādha and Marīca live on the flesh of the sages.[16] Śūrpanakhā desires to drink the blood of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa[17] while pregnant Caṇḍodarī longs to eat the flesh of Sītā.[18] Rāvaṇa himself threatens to eat Sītā for his breakfast.[19] And the Rākṣasas plan to dance while enjoying human flesh.[20]

§ 80. Yet the Rāmāyaṇa occasionally refers to them as men. In the army of Rāma there were to be seven men — Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Vibhīṣaṇa with his four Rākṣasa companions.[21] Moreover, not only are some Rākṣasas called "*Brahmarākṣasas*"[22] but Rāvaṇa's mother refers to her husband as Brahman and *ṛṣisattama*.[23]

§ 81. The identification of Rākṣasas, too, has been attempted by various writers. Among the numerous theories, those of Talboys Wheeler and K. S. Ramaswami Sastri are to be rejected at the very outset as not standing the test of history. Wheeler thought — and Weber agreed with him — that the Rākṣasas in the Rāmāyaṇa represented the Buddhists of Ceylon;[24] Ramaswami Sastri regarded them

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1 GE III, 55, 4-6.
2 NW III, 40, 7.
3 NW III, 41, 22.
NW III, 41, 21.
4 NW V, 19, 9; VI, 36, 3; III, 36,1;
5 III, 27, 3; III, 26, 20.
6 NW I, 18, 6.
7 NW III, 22, 18.
8 NW III, 24, 2.
9 NW III, 5, 15.
10 NW VI, 46, 152; GE I, 14, 39;
NW I, 16, 7-10; III, 7, 18 etc.
11 NW V, 15, 4.
12 NW III, 26, 2.
13 NW V, 12, 16.
14 NW III, 1, 17.
15 NW III, 39, 45.
16 NW III, 5, 14 & III, 42, 5-6.
17 NW III, 24, 15 ff.
18 NW V, 19, 42-43.
19 NW V, 17, 13.
20 NW V, 19, 49.
21 NW VI, 13, 31.
22 GE I, 11, 21.
23 NW V, 91, 45 & 50.
24 Cf. Weber: IA I, p. 121.

as Aryan immigrants to the south who settled down in a fertile tract and built up a great civilization.[1] There is a general consensus of opinion that the Rākṣasas were human beings. D.C.Sen opined that they were "the exaggerated sketches of human beings."[2] He laid due stress on the references to Rāvaṇa as a wise saint in the Sanskrit and Dravidian works.[3] Pargiter thought that the Rākṣasas like the Vānaras were a Dravidian tribe, as Rāvaṇa and Sugrīva are spoken of as "like brothers",[4] (GE V, 51, 2—3 & VI, 20, 10). From the connection between Laṅkā and Janasthāna, he conjectured that these Rākṣasas were a sea-faring people who built up a civilization which was as great as that of North India.[5] These two civilizations have had some connection between them as is evident from the *Brahmarākṣasas* who according to Pargiter were either "descended from Brahmans or Brahmans who had allied themselves with Rākṣasas."[6] Dikshitar, however, thinks that the Brahmarākṣasas were either the result of the penetration of northern ideas or due to banished Brahmans.[7]

§ 82. Other writers consider the Rākṣasas to be aboriginal tribes of ancient India. Vaidya surmised that they "were probably a strong race of men physically, tall in stature and big in dimensions, like some of the Kamathis of Southern India."[8] He also believed that they lived on the sea-coast in the south of India along with the *Yakṣas* whom they ousted and drove towards the north.[9] Dikshitar argued that the Rākṣasas could be taken as a tribe who emerged from the barbarous state to a semi-civilized condition and sought to identify them with the ancestors of modern Andamaners and Australian aborigines.[10] After comparing the social and cultural traits of the Rākṣasas as depicted in the Rāmāyaṇa and of the Gonds, M.V.Kibe arrived at the conclusion that the Gonds — among whom there is also a subcaste called *Rāvaṇavaṃśi*—might be regarded as the modern representatives of the Rākṣasas.[11] Similarly, G. Ramdas traced the similarities between the Rākṣasas and the Kui tribes of the Hills of Central India and the jungles of the Eastern Ghats and sought to establish their identity.

§ 83. As it was stated already with reference to the Vānaras geography is of very little use in the identification of tribes, especially when they are primitive and vary their homes in accordance with the conditions of the environment. The Rākṣasas of the Rāmāyaṇa are no doubt modelled on some aboriginal tribe of Southern India. It would have been interesting if there had been an organisation of them in

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1 Ramaswami Sastri: 1C V p. 195.
2 Sen: BRS p. 35.
3 Sen: BRS pp. 32-34.
4 Pargiter: AIHT p. 278.
5 Pargiter: AIHT p. 277.
6 Pargiter: AIHT p. 242 fn.
7 Dikshitar: *Trans. All-India Ori. Conf.* VII. p. 246.
8 Vaidya: RRV p. 105 f.
9 Vaidya: RRV p. 99.
10 Dikshitar: *Trans. All-India Ori. Conf.* VII pp. 245-246.
11 Kibe: *Kane Festschrift* pp. 264-266.

India and Ceylon at the early date depicted in the Rāmāyaṇa. Leaving aside those features which were imposed on the Rākṣasas by the authors of the epic, and which had been inserted due to exaggeration, the Rākṣasas appear to be a tribe of primitive and ferocious people with cannibalistic tendencies, who occupied the southern outposts of the sub-continent. It is quite likely that they spread as far south as Ceylon. And one may hazard the explanation that they were ousted by the Yakṣas and the Nāgas, who were the inhabitants of this island when the Aryans came.

§ 84. In addition to these three major tribes, the Rāmāyaṇa mentions a number of other peoples. When Viśvāmitra tried to lead away by force Śabalā, the cow of Vasiṣṭha it emanated from its body Kāmbhojas, Pahlavas, Śakas, Tuṣāras, Kirātas, Yavanas and Mlecchas.[1] Daśaratha invited for Rāma's consecration Mlecchas, Yavanas and Śakas besides the kings of the West, the East and the South.[2] Yakṣas, of whom Tāṭakā was one, are mentioned as a weak tribe (*alpavīryā*)[3], who could not stand firmly before Vaiśravaṇa, a Rākṣasa.[4] Dasyus, too, are referred to once as harassing the Brahmans and obstructing their sacrificial ceremonies[5] and again as a group who will be deprived of protection in a kingless state.[6] Further, the ocean complains to Rāma that Dasyus led by Ābhīras drink its water.[7] Some hill-tribes, without any specification, seem to be referred to by the terms *śailāntavāsin*[8] and *Pārvatīya*.[9] Mentioned in the Uttarakāṇḍa are the two important peoples, the *Haihayas*[10] and the *Gandharvas* of *Gandhāra*.[11]

§ 85. Among these, Kāmbhojas and Dasyus are very old, the former being implied in the Ṛg Veda and mentioned in the later saṃhitās[12] and the latter occupying a very important position in the Ṛg Veda. The term Dasyu in the Ṛg Veda did not refer to any particular tribe but it was the general appellation for all non-Aryan tribes, with whom the Aryan immigrants were at war. "Dasyus with Ābhīras as chiefs" occurs in a vague context, but it is not possible on the strength of this reference alone to combine the Dasyus with Ābhīras, who are regarded as the ancestors of modern Āhīrs of United Provinces, Bihar, Nepal and some portions of Rājaputana.[13]

§ 86. "*Mleccha*" does not seem to signify a particular tribe; like Dasyu it has been a general term for all non-Aryan tribes. In fact, the Jain records call the Mlecchas also by the name Dasu, which, in spite of the fanciful derivation suggested as due to biting with their

1 NW I, 50, 2-3 & I, 49, 18 & 20.
2 NW II, 5, 11.
3 NW I, 23, 2.
4 BE VII, 14, 5.
5 NW II, 73, 12.
6 NW II, 73, 28.
7 NW V, 96, 34.
8 NW II, 5, 11.
9 NW II, 3, 55.
10 BE VII, 31, 9.
11 BE VII, 100, 11.
12 Law: KTAI pp. 233 ff.
13 Law: AIT, II. p. 51.

teeth,[1] is a derivative of Dasyu. They are said to live on the border of Aryan territory.[2] A clear example of the change of meaning of the word "*Mleccha*" is its use in Skanda Gupta's Junagarh Inscription in the sense of the Huns.[3] "*Kirātas*", too, appear to represent non-Aryan tribes and the references to various types of Kirātas in the geographical cantos of the fourth kāṇḍa make it clearly a term for more than one tribe (II § 55). Pahlavas, Śakas and Yavanas refer to the Perso-Parthians, Scythians and Greeks, who ruled the Punjab, North-Western Frontier Provinces and Sind during the centuries following the Greek invasion of Alexander. *Tuṣāras* are the same as Tukhāras who were known to the Greek writers as Tocharis[4] and whose language called the Tokharian was recently discovered. The Haihayas and the Gandharvas (better known as Gandhāras) are more familiar tribes in the history of India.

§ 87. This analysis of the people referred to in the Rāmāyaṇa brings us to the following conclusions:- *Firstly*, the epic deals with three major groups of people—the Aryan, the Vānara and the Rākṣasa. *Secondly*, a fair knowledge of the ways of the aborigines is evinced in the descriptions of the tribes other than the Aryan. But a strong tendency to have the Aryan conditions imposed on them is evident in so far as certain features, which are not in keeping with the social background of the aborigines, are worked out in analogy with the Aryan traits. These shall be discussed in detail when they are met with in the study of the social conditions. *Finally*, the people known to the Rāmāyaṇa cover a wide area, showing that the authors of the epic had a fair knowledge of the numerous tribes who lived in India at that time. But they had such a flimsy idea about some of the distant peoples as to make them look somewhat supernatural. Many of the tribes, about whom the authors in Northern India knew very little, appear in marvellous forms with mysterious powers. To sift the facts from the mass of supernatural appendages is, of course, exceedingly difficult.

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1 Jain: LIJC p. 144.
2 *loc. cit.*
3 Cf. Sircar: *Select Inscriptions* p. 301 fn.One may wonder whether, the term "Mleccha" indicates the non-Aryan tribes which are foreign while "Dasyu" signifies those that are indigenous!
4 Cf. Nundo Lal Dey: GD p. 207.

CHAPTER III

THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

A. The City and Urban Life

§ 1. Although the geographical conditions of India depicted in theRāmāyaṇa are generally pre-buddhist they still represent a state later than that reflected in the Brāhmaṇas. A cogent proof for this is that the Rāmāyaṇa depicts an advanced stage of city-life while the Brāhmaṇas represent the early beginnings of it. It is well known that the Aryan immigrants to India were not accustomed to city-life; the "*pur*" in the Ṛg Veda which was explained earlier as an earthwork fortification or a stockade of the nomadic Aryans is being interpreted as the citadel of non-Aryans due to the new light thrown on the subject by the researches of T. E. M. Wheeler.[1] The cities, to which the same word "*pur*" came to be applied later on, appear to be a non-Aryan contribution to India. To what extent the Aryan cities were modelled on the cities of the Indus valley civilization cannot be gauged at present; but their influence is not to be denied altogether. It may, however, be surmised that the development of the Aryan village into a city had been through a regular process which was mainly dependent on the development of commerce.

§ 2. A village, which rose in importance due to some factor like a sea-port, a place of worship, a royal residence, or strategical situation, became in course of time a "*nigama*" due to the fact that traders were attracted there. It thus became a market town and by being a commercial centre feeding the neighbouring villages it developed into a city. Such a process of growth is observed in certain Jātakas which deal with the origin of cities.[2] Although cities came into existence among the Aryans in this manner, they do not appear to have been favoured by the latter—at least by a section of them. The Brahmanical tradition recorded in the Sūtras show how city-life was despised. The Āpastamba Dharmasūtra enjoins "Let us avoid going into towns" (I, 32, 21); the Bauddhāyana states that "It is impossible for one to obtain salvation, who lives in a town covered with dust" (II, 3, 6, 33), while the Gautama Dharmasūtra requires that "one should not recite holy texts at any time in a town."[3]

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1 Wheeler: *Ancient India*, III pp.74 ff; and Piggot: *Pre-historic India*, pp.261 ff.

2 Cf. Bose: SREI II pp.155-158

3 Das: EHAI p.81

§ 3. In spite of these views against cities, they continued to increase. In Buddhist texts only about a score of cities are mentioned and of them, too, six alone are considered by Ānanda to be of any importance;[1] in the Jain Canon ten are mentioned as capital cities.[2] But a century or two later when the Greeks came to India they discovered numerous cities. Although the numbers of cities e.g. 2000 ruled by Porus or 1000 by Eukratides[3] may be regarded as exaggerated records, there cannot be any doubt that the cities were so numerous as to create an impression on the Greeks; Megasthenes' statement that there were thirty cities in Andhra[4] is a sober account which, too, signifies the development of city-life in India during the Mauryan regime.

§ 4. The Rāmāyaṇa, like the Mahābhārata, depicts an age, when city-life was a well-established feature of the Aryan society. The epic, as shown in the previous chapter, knows of a number of important cities of ancient India and its events centre round three cities—Ayodhyā, Kiṣkindhā and Laṅkā. Although the accounts of Ayodhyā and Laṅkā are to a great extent realistic Kiṣkindhā appears to be merely a poet's creation; nothing more than a primitive settlement seems to have been in the mind of the original writer. Kiṣkindhā, with royal highways, stately palaces and beautiful gardens, wherein the Vānaras enjoyed themselves with liquor and incense,[5] loses its reality altogether when Sugrīva's residence is called only a cave (*mahatīṃ guhām*)[6]. The description of the cave as beautiful and made of gold and full of gems, with pillars of crystal and arches of coral[7] is undoubtedly an interpolation, which is not in keeping with the descriptions of Ayodhyā, Girivraja, Mithilā, Śṛṅgaverapura and even of Laṅkā. It does not appear that the Vānaras were accustomed to city-life; their so-called city was in all probability only a village or a tribal settlement and this view receives further support from the fact that the Archaeologists have discovered at the place usually identified with Kiṣkindhā only the remnants of a palaeolithic and neolithic culture.[8]

§ 5. Laṅkā, on the other hand, is described in more realistic terms, except in a few instances where the Indian love for exaggeration plays a part. It is not possible to deny the existence of a form of city-life among the ancient inhabitants of Ceylon. According to the tradition recorded in the Mahāvaṃsa the capital of Ceylon under the Yakṣas was Laṅkā*pura*, which contrasts itself from Anurādha*gāma*, the seat of government of the Aryan regime.[9] The accounts of both Ayodhyā and Laṇkā in the Rāmāyaṇa are somewhat similar; either it is because some

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1 Rhys Davids: *Buddhist India*. p.37
2 Jain: LIJC p.251
3 Das: EHAI p.137
4 Das: *loc. cit.*
5 NW IV, 26, 4-20
6 NW IV, 26, 4
7 NW IV, 26, 5
8 Pargiter: JRAS (1894) pp.231 ff.
9 G. C. Mendis: *The Early History of Ceylon*, Calcutta 1947, p.13

main features were common to both cities or it is a case of visualizing the conditions at Laṅkā on the basis of what the author or authors saw in North India. The latter alternative has the greater probability.

§ 6. Both Ayodhyā and Laṅkā were large cities; the former is said to have been ten yojanas long and two yojanas broad.[1] The latter is known to be thirty yojanas in breadth[2] and according to the Uttarakāṇḍa a hundred yojanas in length.[3] It is quite likely that the measurements of Laṅkā are far too exaggerated. The main feature of a city has been its ramparts. No wall is mentioned in the description of Ayodhyā; but the existence of city-gates (*nagaradvāra*[4] and *gopura*[5]) implies that a wall too was there. In Laṅkā the white wall had been a special feature[6] and it is described as made of gold.[7] Vārāṇasī too is mentioned as having a good city-wall (*suprākārām*)[8]. Gopuras, which were the town-gates appear to have been decorative as well as utilitarian;[9] they might have been similar to the massive structures of exquisite beauty of the same name in South Indian temples. The city-walls had further watch-towers (*Aṭṭa* or *Aṭṭāla*)[10]; archways (*toraṇas*) of various description also seem to be connected with the ramparts. But there appear to be "toraṇas" other than those connected with the wall. When these archways are mentioned along with the wall in a context, which suggests their connection, such as *Ucchaprākāratoraṇām*[11] and *sāṭṭaprākāra-toraṇām*[12] we may have to regard them either as ornamental structures on the ramparts or as entrances to the city other than the gopuras. In the latter case both toraṇas and gopuras are to be regarded as gates of the city with the architectural design as the only distinguishing feature.

§ 7. Toraṇas independent of the wall, too, are mentioned. The streets of Laṅkā were decorated with toraṇas of gold, jewels, crystals and other precious stones.[13] These seem to have been decorative in purpose and they probably marked the entrances to mansions and palaces. Around the cities were moats (*parikhā*) which were deep[14] and sometimes full of weapons[15] so as to prevent enemies crossing over it to attack the city. The wall and the moat had been the *sine qua non* in Indian cities; and the Rāmāyaṇa establishes their antiquity.

§ 8. Within the city there were streets of various sizes. The royal highway (*rāja-or nṛpamārga*) was the most important of them.

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1 NW 1, 5, 3
2 NW III, 52, 27
3 BE VII, 5, 24
4 BE II, 57, 8
5 NW VI, 104, 63
6 NW III, 53, 10
7 NW V, 2, 6; V, 1, 17; VI, 16, 20; BE V, 3, 6; VII, 3, 27-28
8 BE VII, 38, 17
9 NW VI, 104, 63; GE V, 9, 58
10 NW V, 1, 18; V, 75, 1; V, 56, 139; BE V, 3, 33
11 NW VI, 16, 20
12 NW V, 75, 1. Cf. Also NW III, 53, 10; BE VII; 5, 25
13 NW V, 2, 4; V, 1, 19; IV, 9, 25; GE V, 20, 10; NW III, 53, 10
14 NW I, 5, 6; VI, 17. 11; V, 1, 16
15 NW I, 5, 6. (*nānāyudhasamanvitā*)

In Ayodhyā only one royal highway is mentioned[1] while many of them are said to have existed in Kiṣkindhā.[2] According to Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra there should have been three such highways from west to east and three more from south to north, each being four daṇḍas (24 feet) in width.[3] *Pratolī*, not mentioned in the Arthaśāstra, were the broadways of a city;[4] their breadth is not known but it is likely that they, like the other important roads like the chariot roads (*rathyā*)[5], were four daṇḍas (24 feet) in breadth. It is probable that the minor roads mentioned in the Arthaśāstra[6] existed at the time depicted by the Rāmāyaṇa and the good roads of Ayodhyā might have been of these types.[7] The streets were abounding with houses of various descriptions, which will be dealt with in a special section (III, §§ 16 ff.).

§ 9. No detailed account of the conveniences in cities is available in the Rāmāyaṇa. However, it appears that the dusty streets were sprinkled with water[8] just as it is done today in some Indian towns like Poona. There are also references to street lights as *Dīpavṛkṣas* of Ayodhyā.[9] Further there were the parks and the forest-groves for recreation[10] (V, § 65). Means of conveyance within the cities were the elephant, the horse and the chariot, of which the streets are said to be full.[11]

§ 10. The cities were, of course, the centres of commerce. In addition to shops, markets and store-houses, there were even eating houses.[12] Many merchants from different countries (*nānādeśāgata*) met in cities with various commodities (*nānāpaṇya*)[13] and the abundance of traders is referred to as a special feature of a city.[14] Being the centres of trade they were full of wealth and corn (*dhanadhānyasamanvitaṃ*)[15] and precious stones (*nānāratnavibhūṣitā*).[16] The impression that a city abounded in precious metals and stones seems to be the basis for the description of Laṅkā as having nets of gold, altars of sapphire, and floors of gems, crystal, pearls and coral.[17] As compared with the villages, where the people lived on agriculture, the cities were repositories of wealth and because they were invariably forts, they were made self-sufficient; as the Arthaśāstra states supplies in forts should be such as they last many years (*anekavarṣopabhogasahān*)[18].

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1 NW I, 5, 4
2 NW IV, 26, 9
3 Shama Sastri: AK p.54
4 NW V. 1, 18; VI 54, 6
5 NW VI, 54, 6
6 Shama Sastri: AK p.54
7 NW I, 6, 29
8 NW I, 5, 4
9 NW II, 8, 18
10 NW VI, 103, 33; BE I, 5, 12; V, 3, 34; VII, 70, 13; II, V, 1, 47.
11 NW II, 17, 44; III, 53 11; V, 80, 24; GE I, 5, 9.
12 NW VI, 104, 63; V, 49, 20; I, 5, 5; II, 18, 7.
13 BE VII, 70, 14.
14 Cf. NW. I, 5, 5.
15 NW I, 5, 9.
16 NW I, 5, 5; I, 5, 14.
17 NW V, 2, 9-10.
18 Shama Sastri: AK p. 56.

§ 11. The cities were well-guarded; the wall and the moat were for defence. Archers[1] and hundreds of soldiers[2] with mechanical weapons,[3] such as *Śataghnī* (hundred-killers!)[4] guarded Ayodhyā. Likewise Laṅkā, which seems to have been constructed on a mountain[5] probably from the point of view of strategy was fortified with a wall and a moat; and watch-towers[6] were supplied with such mechanical weapons like *Śataghnī*.[7] A large army[8] armed with mechanical weapons (*yantraśastra*) manned the fortress.[9]

§ 12. On festive occasions, the cities and their buildings were decorated. The Rāmāyaṇa refers to the decoration of Campā to receive Ṛśyaśṛṅga,[10] of Girivraja to welcome Bharata,[11] of Ayodhyā[12] and Kiṣkindhā[13] for the consecration of Rāma and Sugrīva respectively, of Laṅkā to celebrate Indrajit's success in war against Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa[14] and of Ayodhyā for the return of Rāma.[15] Houses, too, were decorated on these occasions.[16] The streets were sprinkled with water; and flowers, incense and fried paddy (*lāja*) were scattered on them.[17] Rows of banners and flags were usually employed for decoration[18] while floral festoons[19] and pitchers full of water,[20] too, were forms of decoration. The latter seem to have had a magical significance in Indian ritual.

§ 13. A comment of C.V. Vaidya on the decorations of Ayodhyā for Rāma's consecration may be considered here. He says that "probably this description of the scene in the Rāmāyaṇa is taken from what the last editor actually saw of a great city like Pāṭalīputra under a great prince like Agnimitra, for, as we shall show elsewhere, temples had no existence in the days of Rāma and there was not that grandeur of public demonstration in his sturdy days. But we may take it that the city with such means as the civilization then existing did its utmost to celebrate the great occasion."[21] There is very little doubt that the description of Ayodhyā is based by the author on a contemporary capital and it is likely that Pāṭalīputra was his model here. But the accounts do not appear to be so late as to surmise that it was Pāṭalīputra of the time of Agnimitra (*circa* 1st century B.C.) The absence of temples during the era depicted in the Rāmāyaṇa is, again, disproved; the epic itself mentions a number of temples (III § 17).

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1 NW I, 5, 6.
2 NW I, 5, 18.
3 NW I, 5, 8.
4 NW I, 5, 9.
5 NW V, 1, 20.
6 NW V, 1. 24.
7 NN V, 1, 24.
8 NW V, 1, 48; V, 1, 15.
9 NW V, 2, 18; VII 3, 27-28.
10 NW I, 12, 28.
11 NW II, 1, 38-39.
12 NW II, 8, 13-18.
13 NW IV, 19, 43.
14 NW VI, 23, 19.
15 NW VI, 108. 5 ff.
16 NW VI, 108, 6; GE II, 12, 31,
17 NW VI, 108, 5ff; II, 8, 17; II. 1, 38-39; II, 7, 18; GE I, 79, 39
18 NW II, 8, 13; II, 46, 11; IV. 19, 43; V, 1, 18; VI, 23, 19; VI 108, 6 ff.
19 GE II, 12, 31.
20 GE I, 79, 39.
21 Vaidya: RRV p. 121.

§ 14. Finally, the art of decorating cities and houses has been no novel feature in India. Even the Ṛg Veda implies in its descriptions e.g. of Savitar's chariot in I, 35, 4, that some form of decoration was known. The prevalence of the banner and the flag in most cultures of the world is a proof of their antiquity. Jain texts speak of a ceremony, wherein a flower-house was "decorated with beautiful huge garlands and the designs in five coloured rice grains."[1] So do the Buddhist texts describe cities decorated on festive occasions. As such Vaidya is not quite correct in saying that there was "not that grandeur in public demonstration" in the sturdy days of Rāma.

§ 15. The mainstay of a city is its population; a clever attempt has been made by the author to depict in two places the desolate scene presented by a city, whose people had abandoned it.[2] It is here observed that the first factor to mark the absence of people is the deterioration of sanitary conditions; the city goes to a state, which resembles a well with its walls broken or a tank full of fish and tortoises, which has run dry and become bereft of lotuses.[3] The streets are not swept and due to the collection of dirt it becomes a place loved by abhorrent spirits.[4] The graphic description evinces the familiarity on the part of the author or authors of cities which had been abandoned by people. A city presents an equally desolate sight when the people are in mourning for the death of its king.[5]

B. Buildings in the City

§ 16. An essential feature of the cities was their buildings. Many varieties of them are mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa. *Harmya*, *Prāsāda* and *Vimāna* are the most important because they appear to have represented the largest of the buildings in ancient cities; and they seem to have been called "*viśālāyatanāni*" (large abodes)[6]. The three types are mentioned together as if to suggest their distinction;[7] but sometimes only two are referred to. *Harmya* and *Prāsāda*[8] are more often grouped together while *Prāsāda* and *Vimāna*[9] occur together much less and the combination of *Harmya* and *Vimāna* is rare. They are mentioned separately in a number of places.[10] Besides, *Vimāna* occurs in the Rāmāyaṇa not only as a building but also as an aerial vehicle.[11] It appears from the Rāmāyaṇa that these names were used for large houses without much

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1 Jain: LIJC p. 239.
2 NW II, 127, 1-22 and II, 36, 21-22.
3 NW II, 127, 12-14.
4 NW II, 36, 21-22.
5 NW II, 78, 10-11.
6 NW VI, 15, 2.
7 NW V, 8, 3; BE II, 57, 18.
8 NW III, 61, 7; III, 41, 22; II 104, 33; II, 52, 18.
9 NW VI, 15. 22
10 *Harmya*: NW V, 50, 29; VI, 104, 63; *Prāsāda*: NW VI, 2, 5; NW II, 18, 17; *Vimāna*: BE VII, 101, 14; NW VI, 46, 68; I, 5, 13; NW IV 26, 11
11 Cf. NW II, 91, 21.

discrimination; they seem to be used almost as synonyms. But it is likely that they meant three particular types although the Rāmāyaṇa does not show any difference in their usage. *Harmya* is a large house or "any house, large building or residence of a wealthy person"; it may also be a palace or a mansion. *Prāsāda*, although a palace, meant a "lofty palatial mansion (approached by steps)." *Vimana*, on the other hand, refers to a "palace of an emperor or supreme monarch (especially one with seven stories)."[1] It is clear that these special types were not meant by the author or authors of the Rāmāyaṇa for, in that case, the use of *Vimānas* in the plural very often would not be found.

§ 17. Besides these the residential buildings called *Gṛha*[2] and *Bhavana*[3] were known. The bigger houses were probably meant by the term *Gṛhamukhya*[4] and the fact that these were mainly residential is borne out by the mention of *Kuṭumbibhavana*.[5] Among the other buildings referred to in the epic are the places of worship such as *Devāyatana*[6] and *Caityagṛha*,[7] commercial buildings like *Āpaṇa*[8] and public institutions such as *Sabhā*[9] and *Koṣṭhāgāra*.[10] *Sabhā* may stand for an assembly hall, a court of a king, or of justice, a council chamber or a gambling house or even for a eating house[11] while *Koṣṭhāgāra* signifies a store-room, a granary or the treasury.

§ 18. The building about which the Rāmāyaṇa gives abundant information is the *Rājaveśma* or the king's palace. Royal palaces of Ayodhyā, Kiṣkindhā and Laṅkā are described in detail and an attempt to represent the ideal of luxury and comfort is traceable in these accounts. A main feature of the palaces of Ayodhyā and Laṅkā was the *Antaḥpura*,[12] wherein the consorts of the king lived; it appears that each queen had her own apartment as reference is made to the house (*niveśana*) of Kausalyā in Daśaratha's *Antaḥpura*.[13] There were in each palace a number of *Śālās*[14] which as in Rāvaṇa's palaces were so richly decorated as to display the ruler's wealth.

§ 19. *Garbha*[15] and *Kakṣa*[16] refer to the numerous rooms of a palace while *Kakṣya* and also *Kakṣa* in some contexts appear to represent court-yards. The palaces of Daśaratha and Rāma had seven court-

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1 Monier-Williams *Skt-Eng. Dictionary* s.vv.
2 NW II, 91, 21; I, 5, 14; BE I, 5, 16-17.
3 NW II, 8, 12; V, 8, 3,
4 NW IV 26, 16; BE VII, 70, 11; VII, 101, 14.
5 BE II, 71, 39.
6 NW II, 8, 11; I, 5, 10; BE VII 101, 15.
7 NW V, 10, 18.
8 NW II, 8, 12; V, 104, 63; BE VII, 70, 11.
9 NW II, 8, 13; I, 5, 10.
10 NW V, 2, 18.
11 Cf. Monier-Williams *Skt. Eng. Dictionary*, s.v.
12 NW II, 7, 25; V, 3, 30; V, 3, 25.
13 NW II, 19, 84.
14 NW V, 5, 43-56; V, 5, 10.
15 NW III, 61, 8.
16 NW V, 4, 20.

yards[1]; in Daśaratha's palaces Vasiṣṭha could pass three courtyards in his chariot.[2] And Daśaratha was in the eighth courtyard or chamber (here there is some ambiguity) when Sumantra saw him.[3] Rāvaṇa's mother, too, had a palace with seven court-yards, which were full of elephants, horses, chariots and soldiers.[4] Amenities of these palaces consisted of *Śayyāgṛha*[5] (bed-rooms), *Caryāgṛha*[6] (probably rooms to walk in), *Śaśāṅkagṛha*[7] (balconies), *Citraśālā*[8] (picture galleries) and *Krīḍāgṛha*[9] (rooms for sport). Further there were *Vāraṇaśālā*[10] (stalls for elephants), *Vājiśālā*[11] (stables), and *Yānaśālā*[12] (garages for the chariots). The halls for the soldiers seem to be called *Āvāsa*.[13] The palaces comprising these buildings were undoubtedly very large and according to the Rāmāyaṇa the palace of Rāvaṇa was one yojana in length and half a yojana in breadth[14] while that of Kumbhakarṇa measured two yojans by one.[15] They had many floors[16] (*Bahubhauma*) and Rāvaṇa's palace had seven.[17] The loftiness of the palaces in Ayodhyā is implied by their comparison to Kailāsa[18] and Meru mountains[19] Buildings of Kiṣkindhā and Laṅkā, too, are compared to Kailāsa mountain.[20]

§ 20. In examining the architectural devices of the buildings we find that the houses in the streets were built together without gaps between them; Ayodhyā is described as having no gaps between houses (*avicchinnāntaragṛhām*).[21] The large mansions had walls and moats round them.[22] They would have appeared like miniature cities because they, too, seem to have had *gopuras* and *aṭṭālas*. No reference to a draw-bridge is found but some form of entrance which was mechanically manipulated is discernible in *Kavāṭayantra*.[23]

§ 21. Toraṇas had been, here too, ornamental structures; they were at the entrance and were called also *dvāratoraṇa*.[24] According to C.Shivaramamurti there were "two kinds of gateways, the separate arched one outside the tower gate and the tower-gate itself."[25] *Toraṇa* accordingly is the arched gateway. Its decorative purpose is clear from its employment in Indian and Ceylon architecture even upto the present

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1 NW II, 61, 18; II, 17, 1.
2 NW II, 7, 5.
3 BE II, 57, 24.
4 NW V, 91, 5 ff.
5 BE I, 13, 12.
6 NW VI, 46, 68.
7 NW V, 5, 10.
8 NW V, 5, 10; GE III, 61, 16.
9 GE III, 61, 16.
10 BE I, 13, 12.
11 NW V, 5, 10; BE I, 13, 12.
12 NW III, 39, 3.
13 BE I, 13, 12.
14 BE V, 9, 2 (NW V, 5, 3, appears incorrect)
15 BE VII. 13, 3.
16 NW V, 1, 53.
17 BE V, 2, 50; GE V, 10, 11
18 NW II, 7, 15, & 22; II, 16, 49 & 59.
19 BE II, 88, 7.
20 NW IV, 26, 18; VI 17, 10.
21 NW I; 5, 14.
22 NW V, 3, 25f; V, 4, 19; II, 76, 1; II, 91, 19.
23 NW II, 77, 30.
24 NW V, 3, 26.
25 Shivaramamurti JOR XII p. 88.

day. Moreover, the Rāmāyaṇa states that they were made of gold,[1] gems[2] and ivory.[3] A penchant for exaggeration is to be observed in these accounts. Due to the desire of the writers to draw a picture of supernatural conditions, we are not informed as to what materials were used in the construction of these buildings. From two verses we are led to conjecture that the walls were white-washed with lime[4] and the floors were unpaved[5]. If the floors were paved it was not possible for Kausalyā to be covered with dust (*pāṃsunā pariguṇṭhitam*) when she heard of Rāma's banishment and fainted in her abode. It is unprobable that the palace rooms were unswept!

§ 22. The houses had doors and windows which too appear to have been decorated.[6] *Stambhas* or pillars of gold, silver, crystal, ivory and gems are mentioned as a notable feature of the buildings of Laṅkā;[7] Sugrīva's palace is also described as having gem-set pillars.[8] And the *Caityagṛha* and a mansion of Laṅkā are further said to have had no less than a thousand pillars.[9] Another architectural feature was *Sopāṇa* or the stairway. In keeping with the other exaggerated accounts these, too, are said to be constructed of gold, sapphire and coral.[10] The houses also had balconies (*Vedika*[11] and *Vitardi*[12]). *Kūṭāgāras* or pinnacled halls are mentioned in the description of Rāvaṇa's palace[13] while pinnacles (*Viṭaṅka*) are referred to as ornamental structures on the roof of palaces and mansions.[14]

§ 23. The palaces had further amenities for the use of their inmates. There were *Pramadāvanas* or forest-groves for the use of the females of the Antaḥpura,[15] and also groves and forests (*niṣkuta* and *sañjavana*) for the purpose of recreation.[16] Artificial mountains,[17] lakes[18] and ponds[19] were within the palace premises. There appears to have been provision for "a drinking ground" (*pānabhūmi*) too.[20] Besides, there were pet birds and animals in the palaces.[21]

§ 24. The data on city-life in the Rāmāyaṇa is limited; besides giving glorious descriptions of cities and palaces, the epic does not deal with the life of the people at all. The city-dweller or, as a matter of fact, the common man has not come within the scope of the Rāmāyaṇa. As such our knowledge is necessarily confined to the kings and princes,

1 NW IV, 26, 20; V, 1, 56; III, 61, 9.
2 NW V, 4 20; II, 16, 50.
3 BE VII, 13, 5.
4 NW VI, 26, 11.
5 NW II, 20, 24.
6 NW III, 61, 10; II 16, 50.
7 NW V, 4, 20; III, 61, 8; BE VII, 13, 4-15.
8 NW IV, 26, 16.
9 NW V, 10, 18; VI, 15, 23.
10 NW V, 5, 44; III, 61, 9; GE III 61, 17; BE VII, 13, 5; NW V, 10, 18.
11 NW IV, 24, 24.
12 NW II 16, 50
13 NW V, 4, 49.
14 NW V, 40, 6, II, 91, 21.
15 BE V, 41, 20.
16 NW V, 8, 3.
17 GE III, 61, 16.
18 GE III, 61, 17.
19 NW III, 61, 12.
20 NW V, 6, 2.
21 NW III, 61, 7; V, 4, 24, BE V, 13, 13.

about whom alone the epic speaks. However it can be inferred from the data that city-life was well oragnised during the period depicted by the Rāmāyaṇa, and that town-planning and building of houses had developed to a considerable degree.

C. Rural and Forest life

§ 25. The Rāmāyaṇa is mainly a tale of cities and forests. The village has hardly any place in the story but for the fact that Bharata after the exile of Rāma is said to have ruled in the latter's name from a village called Nandigrāma. Villages are only met in the course of travelling between cities and forests.[1] Once Bharata curses his mother that she should live in the village of sinners.[2] The occupations of the rural people such as agriculture and cattle-breeding are occasionally mentioned (III §§ 44 ff). Nothing more about the rural areas is known from the Rāmāyaṇa. It is interesting how the village which has been from the earliest known time the most important political unit of India is left out with hardly any comment whatsoever. However, it cannot be regarded as representing a state when the village lost its importance because no such stage is conceivable in Indian history. Moreover, the Buddhist and the Jain works depicting the same period give an altogether different picture of the village and its relation to the political organisation. The problem here is that the story itself set the limitation. The lack of data on rural life in the Rāmāyaṇa means that the backbone of the contemporary Indian society is left unrepresented.

§ 26. The life in the forest, on the other hand, finds a more important place in the epic because its heroes spent the major part of their youth in exile in the forests of Deccan. Probably due to the third stage (i.e. *Vānaprastha*) in the ideal scheme of life, dwelling in forests had been looked upon from a religious point of view. It had been a desirable form of life as Rāma told his mother when he was banished, "The forest-dwelling of the good is specially praised."[3] So is the forest also called "delightful to the sages" (*munijanapriyam.*)[4] The ascetics had found the solitude of the thick forest an incentive to higher spiritual endeavours and conducive to religious attainments. Yet the difficulties of forest life are not entirely overlooked. In a vivid account given by Rāma to dissuade Sītā from accompanying him to the forest, he enumerates the hardships endured by a forest-dweller such as the danger of being exposed to attacks of ferocious animals, poisonous snakes and insects, the uncertainty of food supply, the lack of comforts in clothing and shelter and the necessity for ascetic practices.[5] The

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1 NW II, 50, 9; BE II, 57 4; GE I, 9, 58.
2 NW II, 83, 24.
3 NW II, 21, 33.
4 NW II, 29, 29; II, 32, 23.
5 NW II, 31, 6-29.

life in the forest had been organised on the model of that of the ascetics and as such it had been regarded as a religious matter; hence does Sītā say that she will be purified by the merits gained by living in the forest.[1]

§ 27. The forest-dwellers were expected to wear garments of bark (*Cīra* and *Valkala*)[2] and of *Kuśa* grass[3] and skins of the black antelope (*ajina*).[4] Their hair had to be arranged into a knot of braided locks, (*jaṭāmaṇḍala*),[5] in the formation of which the sap of the banyan tree was utilised.[6] Their food consisted mainly of wild yams and fruit[7] and a detailed list mentions fruits such as the jujube, *Piyal*, *āmalaka* (Emblic myrobalan), *Iṅguda* (Terminalia Catappa) and acrid *Tinduka* (Diospyros Embryopteris) and corn such as millet and wild rice.[8] These had to be collected by the forest-dwellers and hence their main utensils were the hoe, the basket (*khanitrapiṭake*)[9] and the *śikka* (Prakrit for *śikya*) which probably was a "loop-string."[10] Nothing more seems to have been in their possession, and in the hermitages were found as the belongings of the ascetics only water-vessels, *kuśa* grass, antelopes' skins, fuel and other material for sacrifices.[11] They lived in huts (*Uṭaja*)[12] and *Parṇaśālās*.[13] The *Parṇaśālās* which literally mean 'halls made of leaves' got their name from the fact that they were thatched with leaves.[14] The frame-work was of sticks and creepers.[15] Over it straw mats seem to have been tied as walls[16] and the floor was prepared by besmearing it with a mixture of clay as it is still done in certain parts of India and Ceylon.[17] The BE describes how Lakṣmaṇa built a hut at Pañcavaṭī; he used bamboos for pillars and beams, over which he spread (probably as rafters) the branches of the *Śamī* tree. He tied them with strong creepers and thatched the roof with *Kuśa*, *Kāśa* and *Śara* grasses and levelled up the floor.[18]

§ 28. As the normal forest-dweller was an ascetic who led the life of a *Vānaprastha* the centres of human habitation in the forests were the hermitages (*Āśramas*) which were referred to under the names of their chief sages.[19] Hermitages of Siddha, Gautama, Viśvāmitra, Bharadvāja, Atri, Sutīkṣṇa, Agastya etc., are mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa. A hermitage was a serene place, "where the wild animals were

1 NW II, 32, 16.
2 NW II, 30, 17; II, 31, 20; II, 13, 40; II, 22, 7, II, 37, 15.
3 NW II, 51, 21.
4 NW II, 22, 7; II, 13, 40; II, 31, 20; II, 37, 15.
5 NW II, 19, 40 & 43; BE II, 52, 70.
6 NW II, 56, 2.
7 NW II, 51, 21, II, 30, 16; II, 37, 15.
8 NW II, 31, 18.
9 Cf. NW II, 34, 19.
10 NW II, 40, 5.
11 NW III, 4, 4.
12 NW II, 113, 24.
13 NW II, 113, 17; BE VII, 65, 39.
14 NW II, 113, 18; BE II, 56, 34; NW II, 60, 21.
15 NW II, 60, 20.
16 BE II, 56, 21.
17 NW II, 60, 22.
18 BE III, 15, 21-23.
19 NW III, 4, 1; III, 1, 2; BE II, 50,13.

quiet and which was decked with altars and was an open door to heaven."[1] These āśramas were the rest-houses for the weary travellers; and there anyone could expect a warm welcome because the treatment of guests (*atithi-satkāra* and *-pūjā*) was an important function of the ascetics.[2]

§ 29. The life of the *Vānaprastha*, which is described in such detail in the Rāmāyaṇa is identical with that which was laid down for him by the law books. Thus we find that the Manusmṛti prescribes certain requirements for a Vānaprastha and they do not differ in principle from what is described in the epic.[3]

D. Wealth and Prosperity

§ 30. The universal division of human society into the rich and the poor is known to the Rāmāyaṇa as well. There were the wealthy families who lived in grandiose mansions (*śrīmatsu bhavaneṣu*)[4] and also the destitutes (*dīna*) who had to be pitied.[5] Although to be kind to the poor is regarded a virtue,[6] a man without wealth appears to have been despised for Kausalyā advises Sītā not to spurn Rāma because he is deprived of his riches.[7] An interesting account of the popular concept of wealth is given in a speech of Lakṣmaṇa to Rāma;[8] in spite of the fact that one may regard this section as a later elaboration of some casual remark of Lakṣmaṇa because of its didactic significance, its antiquity even as an interpolation cannot be disproved for it occurs in all three recensions without much alteration. In this Lakṣmaṇa says, "All actions issue forth from the prosperous ones, with abundant riches;[9] likewise all actions of the foolish man who is devoid of wealth are cut off.[10] The cause of sin (*pāpa*) is the lack of wealth.[11] It is the man with riches who has friends and relations; he is *the* man in the world and the erudite one. He is the most fortunate, the virtuous, the valorous and the most honoured.[12] Though desirous of riches it is not possible for a man of meagre means to acquire wealth, for wealth is bound with wealth as an elephant is bound by elephants.[13] Acquire wealth, O Kākutstha, for the cause of this existence is wealth. I do not see a difference between the poor and the dead.[14] The pauper and an outcast are alike to me; they do not accept anything from an outcast and a pauper does not give.[15] Without doubt all virtue, desire, pride,

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1 NW II, 103, 3-4.
2 NW I, 8, 50; I, 21, 21; BE VII, 65, 4; VII. 66, 15.
3 Manusmṛti: VI, 2--7.
4 NW II, 8, 12.
5 NW II, 4, 18.
6 NW II, 4, 18.
7 NW II, 42, 5.
8 NW VI, 61, 29-40.
9 NW VI, 61, 29.
10 NW VI, 61, 30.
11 NW VI, 61, 31.
12 NW VI, 61, 32-33.
13 NW VI. 61, 34-35.
14 NW VI, 61, 36 (Not BE).
15 NW VI, 61, 37 (Not BE).

happiness, exasperation, erudition and restraint emanate from wealth."[1] From this it is evident that the economic structure of the period reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa had been one where capital was predominant. The wealthy class, against which Lakṣmaṇa seems to speak, had been so very powerful that it commanded with its wealth all spheres of life. Riches had been the be all and end all of life because everything ranging from popular approval to virtue had been dependent on wealth. This account further reveals that the poor classes had been very badly placed in the economic structure of the society.

§ 31. The wealthy man possessed riches (*dhana*), corn (*dhānya*)[2] food (*bhojana*), houses (*chādana*)[3], other material effects (*dravya*)[4], cows and horses (*paśu; gava; aśva*)[5], gold[6] and precious stones (*ratna*).[7] An analysis of the gifts given and exchanged by the characters of the Rāmāyaṇa gives us a clear idea of the standard of wealth at this period. Daśaratha gives as *Dakṣiṇā* to Brahmans 400,000 head of cattle, a crore of gold and four crores of silver.[8] When offered the earth the officiating priests at Daśaratha's sacrifice ask instead for gems, gold or cattle. Janaka gives Sītā as *Kanyādāna* garments, ornaments, gems, vehicles, 400,000 head of cattle, a four-fold army, food and drink and a thousand slaves with gold necklaces (*niṣkakaṇṭha*).[9] To those who brought the news of Rāma's consecration Kausalyā presented gold, cattle and gems,[10] while Rāma and Sītā gave Suyajña a thousand head of cattle.[11]

§ 32. These gifts normally appear to be comprising the things particular to a country: as such the king of the Kekayas gives Bharata a thousand horses,[12] elephants, asses and even dogs;[13] while the Niṣādas offer Bharata fish, meat and honey[14] and his army yams, fruits and fresh and dried meat.[15] Bharata was given by the Kekaya king ten and twelve thousands of *rukma-Niṣkas* (gold coins).[16] Bharata's gift to Hanumat consisted of a 100,000 head of cattle, 100 villages, 16 wives with ear-ornaments, 2,000 pieces (*or coins*) of gold, a crore of *hiraṇya*, a 100 slaves and various garments.[17] At Rāma's consecration he presents to the Brahmans 1,000 horses, 10,000 cows, 10,000 bulls, thirty crores of gold, vehicles, ornaments, garments, beds, seats and many villages[18] and receives as gifts from kings horses, vehicles, gems, elephants, sandal-wood, ornaments, pearls, coral, beautiful slaves, goats and sheep

1 NW VI, 61, 40.
2 NW VI, 110, 31; BE I, 6, 7; II, 50, 8; NW I, 5, 9.
3 NW II, 35, 14.
4 NW II, 36, 19.
5 NW 11, 36, 19; I, 5, 1; BE I, 6, 7.
6 BE VII, 94, 20.
7 NW I, 5, 9; II, 34, 30.
8 NW I, 10, 39-40.
9 NW I, 70, 3-7.
10 GE II, 2, 34.
11 NW II, 35, 9.
12 NW II, 76, 23.
13 BE II, 70, 20-23.
14 NW II, 96, 1.
15 NW II, 96, 8.
16 NW II, 76, 21.
17 NW VI, 106, 52-54.
18 NW VI, 109, 87-88.

and chariots.[1] A special gift from Yudhājit consisted of a thousand horses, blankets, beautiful or painted cloth, and gems.[2]

§ 33. From these it is clear that cattle were the most important standard of wealth; this is a predominant feature in the Aryan or even earlier Indo-European economy as is shown by the application of the Latin word for cattle (*pecus*) in the sense of wealth. In India during the period reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa cattle had been used as the medium of exchange; and as such great care was taken of them.[3] The importance of cattle-rearing in India is also reflected in the Arthaśāstra, where not only is a superintendent of cows recommended but also elaborate rules on dairy farming are laid down.[4] Horses, too, appear to have had an economic significance; Bose thinks that the horses were preferred by the military class.[5] However, in the Rāmāyaṇa horses are not as important as the cattle are and they are not given by the kings of the East as presents. On the other hand, the western regions of India seem to have given greater prominence to horses. And it is to the Mahābhārata that Bose refers to prove that the horse was a definite medium of exchange.[6] It is interesting to note on this point, that the Rāmāyaṇa depicts the economy of Eastern India while the Mahābhārata reflects that of the West.

§ 34. Gold, silver and precious stones come next in importance. Gold is referred to with the terms *Suvarṇa* and *Hiraṇya* which appear to signify two forms of gold; for instance Bharata offers Hanumat two thousand of *Suvarṇa* and a crore of *Hiraṇya*[7] and Kuśa and Lava ask, "What can we do with *Suvarṇa* and *Hiraṇya* in the forest?"[8] *Kāñcana*[9], *Jātarūpa*[10] and *Rukma*[11] appear to be terms for gold in general. But *Jāmbūnada*,[12] *Taptahāṭaka*[13] and *Śātakumbha*[14] have also been regarded as three varieties of gold; according to the Arthaśāstra *Jāmbūnada* is named after the river ambu and *Śātakumbha* from the mountain of Śatakumbha while *Hāṭaka* comes from the mines of that name[15].

§ 35. The distinction between *Suvarṇa* and *Hiraṇya* is not maintained in a uniform manner in literature. The term *hiraṇya* is problematic as it is used in a variety of senses. In the Arthāśāstra it occurs with different forms of payment such as *Dhānya*, *Paśu*, *hiraṇya*, *kupya* etc. A similar list is given by Vālin as the causes of war (i.e. *Bhūmi*, *hiraṇya*, *kupya*, *paśu*) although it is not clear whether these were

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1 BE VII, 39, 9-10.
2 BE VII, 100, 2-3.
3 Cf. Jain: LIJC p.94 f.
4 Shama Sastri: AK pp.128-131.
5 Bose: SREI II, p.352.
6 Bose: SREI II, p.352 f.
7 NW VI, 106, 54.
8 BE VII, 94, 20.
9 NW III, 61, 8; BE VII, 13. 4.
10 NW III, 47, 16.
11 NW III, 47, 14.
12 NW V, 2, 9.
13 NW V, 2, 10.
14 NW II, 104, 70.
15 Shama Sastri: AKT p.89.

actually taxes.[1] Ghosal rejects the suggestion that it was a tax on the hoard of gold and suggests that it was one of the taxes on agricultural and industrial products. The reasons given by him as well as Todar Mal who seems to support him in principle are not cogent enough to settle the meaning of the word here.[2] In Buddhist texts it appears as a gold coin and as uncoined bullion.[3] *Suvarṇa* appears in Pāli records as bullion and also as gold coin. But the Brāhmaṇas mention a coin by the name of *Suvarṇa* which is distinguished from *Hiraṇya*.[4] From the Arthaśāstra it is clear that there was a gold coin by the name of *Suvarṇa*[5] which was equal to 16 *māṣas*, i.e. about 175 grains troy. The difficulty presented by *Suvarṇa* and *Hiraṇya* in the Rāmāyaṇa may be best overcome by regarding *Hiraṇya* as uncoined bullion and *Suvarṇa* as a gold coin.

§ 36. Beside *Suvarṇa*, the Rāmāyaṇa knows of a coin made of gold called the *Niṣka*[6] with which Rāma pays his servants and attendants; *Niṣka* is the name of a necklace, too, and in this sense it is referred to when describing the slaves presented to Sītā by Janaka as *Niṣkakaṇṭha*.[7] *Niṣka* is a very old term which is used a number of times in the Ṛgveda. It is used in the sense of both a necklace and a coin e.g. *arhan bibharṣi sāyakāni dhanvārhan niṣkaṃ yajatam viśvarūpam* where it means a necklace[8] and *śataṃ rājño nādhamānasya niṣkāñ chatam aśvān prayatānt sadya ādam* where it signifies a coin.[9] The two meanings of this term had led to a number of theories. Most of the previous scholars held the view that *niṣka* was, to begin with, an ornament which in keeping with the commercial practice of the ancient period was used in barter as a medium of exchange.[10] These views were based on an assumption that there were no coins in India till foreigners introduced them at a later date. In fact Max Müller was of opinion that "the Ṛgvedasaṃhitā could not have been collected before the second century after Christ because the word *niṣka* occurs in the hymns."[11] But it is known for certain today that the art of coinage was known to the Indians long before the advent of the Greeks and other foreigners (I § 102); the references in Vedic Literature to coined currency are clear. *Niṣka* in Ṛgveda I, 126, 2 is for all intents and purposes a standard of currency, for, as Macdonell and Keith state, the singer who celebrates here the receipt of a hundred niṣkas and a hundred horses "could hardly require the *Niṣkas* for purposes of personal adornment."[12] *Śatamāna*

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1 NW IV. 16, 62.
2 For detailed discussion Cf. Bose: SREI I, p.134.
3 Bose: SREI II p.360
4 Das: EHAI p.73.
5 Shama Sastri: AK p.90.
6 NW II, 35, 22 & 24; II, 76, 21 (rukmaniṣkas)
7 NW I, 70, 6.
8 Ṛgveda: II, 33, 10.
9 Ṛgveda: I, 126, 2.
10 Cf. Monier-Williams: *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, s.v.
11 Max Muller: *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, (rep. Allaḥabad) 1926, p.174 fn.
12 Macdonnell & Keith: *Vedic Index*, I, p.454.

of the Brāhmaṇas, too, is evidently a coin and a wider range of coins such as *nikkha*, *suvaṇṇa suvaṇṇamāsa* and *kahāvaṇa* was known to the Buddhist records,[1] while the Jain Canon mentions *Suvarṇa*, *Suvarṇamāsaka*, *Kārṣāpaṇa*, *Māṣa*, *ardhamāṣa* etc.[2] As such the existence of coins in the early period is no longer refutable. Due to this observation an attempt has been made to explain the *niṣka* as originally a coin which became a necklace afterwards.[3] A common practice in both India and Ceylon of making necklaces out of coins in the modern times is cited in support of this view. This is quite likely; but no definite proof is obtainable from literature. The value of the *niṣka* changed at various times. The Manusmṛti estimates it at four suvarṇas. Of the other metals mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa, silver may either be in metalic form or as coins; it is possible that silver coins like the *Śatamāna* were existing at the time because a statement like 'four crores of silver'[4] becomes otherwise meaningless.

§ 37. Gems of a number of varieties were known; in the Rāmāyaṇa precious stones are mostly mentioned in connection with the palaces of Laṅkā. The tendency to speak of the buildings in Laṅkā as made of and abounding in gems may be explained either as a result of the special effort made by the author or authors to emphasize the supernatural aspect in the description of the Rākṣasas or as a conscious representation of the fame Ceylon enjoyed as a country abounding in gems. Precious stones are generally called *Maṇi*.[5] Among the varieties of gems, known, are *Vaidūrya* or *Vaiḍūrya* (cat's eyes)[6], (a blue kind of which is also mentioned)[7], *Mukta* (pearls)[8], *Sphaṭika* (crystal quartz)[9], *Pravāla* (Coral)[10], *Vajra* (diamond)[11], *Vidruma* (coral)[12], *Indranīla* (emerald) and *Mahānīla* (sapphire).[13] Besides, some varieties of gems found either in rivers or in the sea seem to be known because the Crest-gem of Rāma is described as "born of water" (*jalasambhūta*).[14]

§ 38. The other articles of gift such as garments, ornaments, sandal wood, and vehicles do not appear to have had any special significance as media of exchange. Yet the gift of villages is noteworthy. It is, however, not clear whether the land itself or the revenue from it was given. If the land was given, we may have to assume that the king owned it because the two cases of gift of villages in the Rāmāyaṇa are

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1 Bose: SREI II. p.360.
2 Jain: LIJC p.120.
3 Das: EHAI pp.43-45; Dharma: ABORI, XIX, p.140 fn.
4 NW I, 10, 40.
5 NW VI. 35, 36; V, 70, 11; V. 5, 29.
6 NW V, 70, 11; V. 1, 49; V, 2, 9; VI, 107, 36; III, 39. 8.
7 NW II, 104, 78.
8 NW VI 35, 36, V, 2, 9; IV, 1, 54; VI, 107, 36.
9 BE VII, 13. 4-5; NW V, 1, 53; III, 61, 8; VI, 102, 49.
10 NW VI, 35, 36; V, 1, 49; V, 2, 9; VI, 107, 36.
11 NW V, 50, 18; BE VII, 13. 5; NW III, 61, 8.
12 NW V, 70, 11; V, 50, 18.
13 NW V, 5, 29.
14 NW V, 65, 5.

connected with royalty. The royal ownership of land in ancient India is still an unsettled question. Hopkins analysed the data available in the old literature and came to the conclusion that the king was the owner of all the land.[1] Ghosal refuted his view on the ground that he "fails to distinguish what may be called the regalian rights of the king from the right of ownership"[2] and showed that "the king's claim to supersede or fine negligent cultivators and to enforce the cultivation of a second crop in emergencies is to be connected with his sovereign authority and not with his proprietary right."[3] When the king presents the Brahmans many villages he is not exercising merely his royal authority. It is not a case of substituting an efficient cultivator for an inefficient one. The same applies to the gift of a hundred villages to Hanumat by Bharata. Nor are these new villages, wherein the king had a right to alienate land in distributing it among cultivators or taxpayers for life.[4] So they are either the land which the royalty held as private property, being set apart for their maintenance or else the word "villages" just means the revenue collected from them, to which the king certainly had a claim. While both these alternatives were possible in the ancient economic system the latter has the greater probability because the Brahmans, above all, would not have been given the additional responsibility of maintaining land.

§ 39. Equally interesting are the references to the gift of women and female slaves. The wives given to Hanumat may be a token of goodwill. But the slaves each wife was given suggest that the master had the right of disposing of his slaves. We hear in the Rāmāyaṇa only of gifts of female slaves. Whether the same applied to the male slaves is not clear from the Rāmāyaṇa data but other sources do not seem to distinguish between the male and the female slaves. The claim that the master had to the property of slaves (in the absence of kinsmen according to the Arthaśāstra)[5] seems to be implied in the gift to Sītā of a thousand slaves, with necklaces (*niṣkakaṇṭha*) by Janaka. Just as the similar practice of adorning the horns of cows, given to Brahmans etc., with gold is explicable as a case of giving an enhanced value to the gift, this too may be regarded as a means of increasing the gift by the value of an additional thousand *niṣkas* (necklaces). The Rāmāyaṇa does not make any reference to female slaves who were kept for surreptitious enjoyment. But the emphasis on the beauty of slaves as in *dāsyo rūpasamanvitāḥ* may be interpreted as representing the common custom of employing female slaves for such purposes.[6]

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1 Hopkins: ION pp.221 ff.
2 Ghosal: ASAI p.121.
3 Ghosal: *loc. cit.*, p.96.
4 Shama Sastri: AK p.47.
5 Shama Sastri: AK p.183.
6 Cf. Bose: SREI II, p.415.

§ 40. The ideal of prosperity conceived in the Rāmāyaṇa is of utmost significance. It was not merely the material prosperity, which the Rāmāyaṇa upheld but a fair amalgamation of it with spiritual advancement. The state of India during the reigns of Daśaratha[1] and Rāma[2] and the governorship of Bharata[3] indicates that the social and moral advancement of the people had been the concern of the rulers more than sheer material progress. But the material aspect had not been altogether neglected as is implied by modern Indologists who emphasize only India's religious and philosophical attainments. The famines, which threaten India due to her long periods of drought (*anāvṛṣṭi*) — the Rāmāyaṇa knows of one which extended over ten years[4] — was an important factor which endangered the economic prosperity of the people. A period of prosperity was hence characterised as devoid of famines;[5] Plenty of food, good harvests and abundant crops were the tokens of a palmy age.[6] Abundant rainfall in due season and gentle blowing are the special features of such a period.[7] There was no one who was poor, aggrieved or bereft of prosperity.[8] None was of limited riches (*alpavibhavaḥ*)[9] and was living on others' wealth (*parasvopajīvaka*).[10] The people had wealth and corn[11] and were happy, well-nourished and contented.[12] They wore ornaments and garlands and used perfumes;[13] they were clever and of a pleasant disposition.[14]

§ 41. They were free from sickness and deformities;[15] they were healthy and lived for a hundred years.[16] Their lives were not endangered by fire, wind, wild animals or thieves;[17] and the world was free of *Dasyus*[18] (probably the inimical tribes). No one died young; no sons died and the elders did not have to perform funeral rites of the young.[19] The married life of the people was happy and there were no widows.[20] Women had easy delivery of children and families had many — even a thousand — sons.[21] The people were also educated[22].

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1 NW I, 6, 6-19.
2 NW I, 1, 90-94; VI, 110, 2-9; BE VII, 99, 12-13.
3 BE VII, 41, 18-21.
4 NW III, 1, 43.
5 NW II, 123, 10; I, 1, 90; BE I, 1, 93.
6 BE VII, 99, 12; VII, 70, 10; NW VI, 110, 8.
7 BE VII 41, 20-21; VII, 70, 10; VII, 99, 12; NW VI, 110, 8.
8 NW I, 1, 92; I, 6, 9; I, 6, 19; I, 6, 11; I, 6, 18.
9 NW I, 6, 7.
10 NW I, 6, 9.
11 NW VI, 110, 2.
12 NW I, 6, 7; VI, 110, 5; VI, 110. 2; BE VII, 99, 12.
13 NW I, 6, 11-12; I, 6, 16-17.
14 NW I, 6, 17.
15 NW I, 1, 92; I, 1, 90; BE VII 41, 18; VII, 99, 13; NW VI, 110, 3 & 6.
16 BE VII, 41, 19; VII, 70, 10; NW I, 6, 9; VI, 110, 6.
17 NW I, 1, 91-92; BE I, 1, 93; NW VI, 110, 3
18 NW VI, 110, 4.
19 BE VII, 41, 19; VII, 99, 13; NW VI, 110, 3-4; I, 1. 90.
20 NW I, 1, 91.
21 BE VII, 41, 19; NW I, 6. 9; VI, 110, 6.
22 NW I, 6, 6.

§ 42. In the moral plane they were lofty-souled and possessed of good conduct.[1] They shunned greed, falsehood, dishonesty, swindling, haughtiness, killing, cruelty and indolence.[2] Their livelihood was flawless (*nyāyavṛtti*)[3], and they did not harm one another.[4] They were religious (*dharmaparāyaṇāḥ*)[5] and resorted to the doctrine of Ātman (*ātmadharma*)[6]; and none of them was a nihilist.[7] They tended the fire and performed sacrifices, the king performing a hundred aśvamedhas.[8] The institution of caste was maintained with due stress on the performance of the duties of each caste.[9] And finally the people were loyal to their country and king.[10]

§ 43. In detailing the ideal of prosperity as depicted in the Rāmāyaṇa, we have utilized material from various parts of the epic without any explanation. Of the five passages analysed for this purpose all but NW VI, 110, 2-9 belong to the parts which are generally regarded as late. But the data therein tally with the only authentic passage to such a great extent as to warrant their being used to represent the conditions reflected in the older portions of the epic. The similarity in these passages on the ideal of prosperity may be explained either as due to the later interpolator's imitation of the earlier passages or as a result of the static nature of the concept itself. The ideal described here has remained unchanged for many centuries in India, so much so that even today amidst the global clamour for sheer material development the Indian *weltanschauung* demands a balanced policy of material and spiritual progress. As such the latter alternative *has the greater* probability.

E. Occupations, Arts and Crafts

§ 44. In outlining the uses of the Rāmāyaṇa, as has been already shown (I, § 4), an interpolator suggests that the epic teaches the three professions (*Trayīvārtā*), namely, agriculture, breeding of cattle and trade. In the period, reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa these three appear to be the most important of the occupations of the Vaiśyas.[11] P. C. Dharma seems to err in mentioning as the three main occupations, agriculture (*kṛṣi*) breeding of cattle (*gorakṣa*) and *vārtā*,[12] which she appears to understand as trade. *Vārtā* is a word denoting the occupations of

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1 NW 1, 6, 9, & 13 & 17.
2 NW I, 6, 8-9.
3 NW 1, 6, 6;
4 NW VI, 110, 5.
5 NW VI, 110, 5.
6 NW VI, 110, 9.
7 NW 1, 6, 12.
8 NW 1, 6, 13; I, 1, 93.
9 NW I, 1, 94; VI, 110. 9,
10 NW I, 6, 19.
11 NW II, 73, 19—20.
12 Dharma: ABORI XIX p. 127.

the Vaisyas in general and the commentary, Tilaka of Rāma, explains the term *Vārtā* in the context cited by Dharma as "*Kṛṣigorakṣyavāṇijyakreyaṃ vartetyudāhṛtam.*"[1]

§ 45. Tending cattle is undoubtedly the oldest form of occupation of the Aryans. In addition to its antiquity, the fact that cattle were the medium of exchange and hence regarded the most valuable of the possessions might have stressed the importance of this profession. The Rāmāyaṇa refers to families of cowherds[2] and states that cattle will not breed at times of anarchy,[3] meaning that the cowherds will neglect their duty. Although the economic significance of cattle-breeding is evident from accounts in the other epic, ((III § 33) it appears to be given only a secondary position in this epic. But on the other hand, the Mahābhārata seems to regard tending cattle as the main business of the Vaiśyas. Agriculture too was one of their occupations but according to N. K. Sidhanta the Mahābhārata depicts a "growing feeling against it on account of the cruelties involved, a feeling this, that may be due to Buddhistic influences."[4] The attitude of the Mahabharata to agriculture cannot, however, be explained as due to the influence of Buddhism because the Buddhist texts regarded agriculture as a noble profession along with trade and cattle-breeding.[5] Nor was Buddhism at any time very stringent in its precepts on *Ahiṃsā*—at least when compared with Jainism. The feeling against agriculture may be explained as a result of the stress laid on cattle-breeding in the society of the Mahābhārata, wherein it was a profession in which the kings were interested; they carried out raids to capture cattle and took part in formal ceremonies of counting and branding them.[6] The interest of the royalty in agriculture was in the great epic almost nil.

§ 46. But, on the other hand, the Rāmāyaṇa represents a society where agriculture was more important. Not only are the farmers (*Kṛṣikarāḥ*, *kṛṣijīvanāḥ*)[7] mentioned before the tenders of cattle, but also in agriculture regarded as an occupation of even kings. Janaka was engaged in ploughing, when Sītā was found.[8] This, no doubt, is a special feature of the culture of the Eastern regions of North India; the inhabitants of the alluvial Gangetic basin seem to have led a settled life for a longer period than those of the West. And as such the main occupation of a sedentary civilization i.e. agriculture had become their mainstay. The rulers of the East took part in agriculture and as opposed to those of the West their ceremonies were connected with agriculture

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1 Commentary on BE II, 100, 48
2 NW II, 114, 24; BE II, 50, 9; GE I, 9, 60.
3 NW II, 73, 20,
4 Sidhanta: HAI p. 134.
5 Vinaya IV p. 6.
6 Sidhanta: HAI pp. 134-135.
7 NW II, 114, 21; II, 73, 20.
8 NW III, 2, 14; BE I, 66, 13.

as implied in the account of the ceremonial ploughing of Suddhodana in Buddhist texts.[1] The *Navāgryāyaṇapūjā*[2] which Ramā mentions as a ceremony of the autumnal season, is probably one connected with agriculture because its main purpose appears to be the adoration of the Pitṛs and gods with offerings of the new harvest.

§ 47. The Rāmāyaṇa shows further that rice (*śāli*)[3] was the main cultivation and that the cultivators depended on rain-water for successful crops.[4] A reference to irrigation is traced in BE II, 100,45 where the term "*Adevamātṛka*" is used. Bose interprets this term as "relying on irrigation and not on rainfall"[5]; the commentary, Tilaka, of Rāma regards it as synonymous with *nadīmātṛka* and quotes a verse to the effect that cultivation dependent on river-water is called *nadīmātrka* and that dependent on rainfall is known as *devamātṛka*.[6] The NW makes no mention of this term in whose place we find "*adevadrohaka*" implying that the people were not inimical to gods.[7] The Buddhist and the Jain works show that irrigation was adopted for cultivation; so does a passage in the Mahābhārata.[8] In India with her vagaries of weather, agriculture had to depend on irrigation. Ploughing of the fields was done with ploughs (*lāṅgala* and *hala*) drawn by bulls.[9] Besides, tools such as *kuddāla* (hoe), *kuṭhāra* (axe or hoe), *ṭaṅka* (hatchet), *śūla* (crowbar) and *dātṛ* (sickle) seem to have been used for agricultural purposes.[10] Failure of crops due to drought has been the main cause of famines (III, § 40); the king seems to have concerned himself with such agricultural calamities. Hence Rāma asks Bharata whether the agricultural pursuits were free of troubles (*hiṃsā*)[11] which the commentator explains as the six calamities viz. drought, floods, rats, birds, locusts and invasions.[12]

§ 48. Besides agriculture, cattle-breeding and trade (to be dealt with in a special section; III, F) there was a wide range of occupations, which suggests the existence of some form of division of labour and specialization. Apart from the priests, the soldiers, the traders, the entertainers and the slaves, there were people who followed primitive means of livelihood, or engaged themselves in specialized industrial pursuits. An interesting account of the various vocations is preserved in the NW in the list of people who accompanied Bharata on his march to bring back Rāma[13] (Cf. III §§ 49ff).

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1 Cf. Jātaka 1, 57.
2 NW III, 21, 6. Cf. Ramaswami Sastri: SR p. 159.
3 NW III, 21, 5 & 16.
4 BE IV, 7, 20; GE IV, 6, 20.
5 Bose: SREI I, p. 101. Cf. Ramaswami Sastri: SR p. 115.
6 Commentary on BE II. 100, 45.
7 NW II, 114, 23.
8 Bose: SREI I, pp 100 f; Tain: LIJC p. 89.
9 BE I, 39, 19; NW III, 2, 14; II, 80, 24.
10 NW II, 91, 9; II, 91, 8; BE, I, 39, 19.
11 NW II, 114, 22; BE II. 100, 44.
12 Commentary on BE II 100, 44 Cf. Dharma: ABORI XIX p. 128.
13 NW II, 94, 13 ff

§ 49. Fishing with the hook[1] is known although no decision can be arrived at as to whether it was a means of livelihood or a form of entertainment. On the other hand, hunting is known in both aspects. There were the professional hunters (*lubdhaka*)[2] and bird-catchers who used nets (*dyutavaitāṃsika*)[3] and who specialized in catching partridges (*taittirika*).[4] Besides shooting with arrows, the hunters appear to have employed dogs in the chase, for Sītā in Rāvaṇa's palace is compared to a doe, separated from her herd and surrounded by dogs.[5] Nets (*vāgurā*), concealed weapons or traps (*kūṭa*) and nooses (*pāśa*), too, were commonly used for hunting.[6] Elephant kraals were held for the capture of elephants who were needed for both war and transport. From the accounts gleanable from the Rāmāyaṇa it appears that music was made use of to tempt and distract the animals who were then noosed.[7] The use of a stockade into which elephants were driven is implied in two passages, one of which speaks of an elephant who is driven with arrows tipped with torches.[8] The other mentions an elephant who has gone into bondage (*bandhanaṃ gataḥ*) suddenly.[9] Further, bigger elephants were employed in tying up the newly-caught.[10] Hunting of lions is also referred to in a simile which mentions a lioness who sees her young one in bondage.[11]

§ 50. Associated with the preparation of food were the cooks,[12] food-dressers,[13] makers of sweetmeats,[14] candied sugar[15] and various forms out of sugar.[16] There were also brewers of wine (*śauṇḍika*)[17] and butchers.[18] Attending to the personal requirements of the people were the bathers who knew the science of bathing (*snānaśikṣājñāḥ*)[19], the barbers who shaved the beards[20] and who dressed the hair.[21] The *gāndhikas*[22] (perfumers) were either sellers of perfumes or were those versed in the art of perfumery. The garlanders supplied the flowers and the garlands[23] while the washer-men washed the clothes.[24] The Rāmāyaṇa does not make it very clear as to whether these were employed by the royalty and the nobility as their servants or they ran their own concerns which the public patronized. It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which the individual workers could have their own concerns; but it is likely that many of them were attached to various families whose

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1 NW III, 57, 6.
2 NW II, 112, 1.
3 NW II, 94, 27.
4 NW II, 94, 13.
5 NW III, 61, 4.
6 NW IV, 14, 10; II,13, 26; II, 40, 10.
7 NW V, 90, 44.
8 NW VI, 54, 87.
9 NW II, 80, 39.
10 NW VI 61, 35.
11 NW II, 20, 43.
12 NW II, 94, 16 & 19 & 24; BE VII, 65, 22.
13 NW II, 94, 24 (Bhaktopajīvinaḥ probably — bhaktopasādhaka)
14 NW II, 94, 20.
15 NW II, 94, 25.
16 NW II, 94, 26.
17 NW II, 94,14.
18 NW II, 94, 20.
19 NW II, 94, 14; BE II, 65, 8.
20 NW VI, 109, 16.
21 NW II, 94, 24.
22 NW II, 94, 15.
23 NW II, 94, 20.
24 NW II, 94, 15.

needs they had to look after. Among these employees were *Bodhakas* (wakers, or spies or informers), *Śodhakas* (scavengers),[1] watchers such as *Vṛkṣapālas*, *Vanapālas*[2] and *Caityapālas*[3], and *Mahāmātras*[4] who managed elephants.

§ 51. The artisans formed a very important section of the urban population; and cities are described as replete with thousands of artisans, who were well-versed in all crafts (*sarvaśilpibhiḥ*).[5] They were employed by Bharata to construct a road in the jungle to fetch Rāma back to Ayodhyā.[6] Dharma analyses the lists of the artisans in the Rāmāyaṇa and establishes the existence of both civil and mechanical engineering in the days reflected by the epic.[7]

§ 52. There is no doubt that there was a tendency to specialize in various crafts but the Rāmāyaṇa does not give any positive data as regards the existence of craftguilds. Because industries were fairly advanced and because there were already the trade-guilds it is likely that there were also craft-guilds and a term like *śilpivarga*[8] may be interpreted as signifying them. Moreover, the high degree of specialisation observed within the ranks of artisans might have necessitated an organisation which brought the specialists on allied crafts together. Whether these organisations were as powerful as the modern trade unions is uncertain; we do not find any references in the Rāmāyaṇa to collective undertakings of these organisations. Certain remarks of the citizens of Ayodhyā when Rāma was banished have led Dharma to the conclusion that "the present day '*hartal*' (general strike) is not without precedent."[9] It is however, too far-fetched to regard the desire expressed by the people to give up their industries and trades and follow Rāma to the forest as a conscious strike. It was in no way an attempt to get their grievances redressed which in this case would be to retain Rāma as their ruler. It was merely a natural manifestation of their loyalty to the prince rather than a calculated measure to re-establish him. Further it is very doubtful if a strike of any magnitude could have exercised such a force as to alter the decision of the king.

§ 53. Building-construction appears to have been an important industry of the artisans. It brought together a number of specialist artisans; there was the architect who was called either *sthapati*[10] or *gṛhakartā*.[11] The architects who specialized in building walls were

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1 NW II, 94, 25.
2 GE V, 39, 3.
3 BE V, 43, 13.
4 NW V, 4, 21. The term *mahāmātra* is interesting in this sense when compared with the meaning of "minister" given to it in the Asokan inscriptions.
5 NW VI, 108, 4; BE I, 5, 10; NW II, 90, 21; II, 94, 16.
6 NW II, 90, 17; II, 90, 21.
7 Dharma: ABORI XIX pp.145-146.
8 NW II, 90, 21.
9 Dharma: PO II p. 123; BE II, 48, 4; 22; 24; 27.
10 NW II, 94, 19; II, 91, 2.
11 BE VII, 5, 19.

called *prākārikas*.[1] For various aspects of a building construction, there were carpenters or masons who were called "experts in the work of threads" (*Sūtrakarmaviśārada*);[2] plasterers and whitewashers[3] and workers in bamboo (*vaṃśakarmakara*).[4] And associated with it were the brick-makers[5] and the lime-burners.[6]

§ 54. Mining and metal-work had been developed to such an extent that working on each metal had become a speciality. Mines for silver, iron and copper are mentioned.[7] But there were other mines too. In ancient India mining had been a royal monopoly and an important source of income for the king. The rules laid down in the Arthaśāstra show how systematically this industry was carried on.[8] The Rāmāyaṇa refers to a number of workers on metal; there were the purifiers of gold (*kanakaśodhaka*)[9] and goldsmiths (*hairaṇyaka* and *svarṇakāra*).[10] Copper-smiths (*tāmrakāra*)[11], and brass-founders (*Ārakūṭakṛt*)[12] were also employed in Ayodhyā in addition to *kāṃsya-kāras*,[13] who might have been either brass-founders or workers in white or bell metal. Blacksmiths appear to have been engaged mostly for the making of weapons because iron was used extensively for them. Weapons of *kālāyasa*[14] (black iron) are often referred to while arrows are once called *karmāramārjita* (polished by the blacksmith).[15] The use of iron for other purposes is seen in the reference to an archway in Laṅkā which was made of iron.[16]

§ 55. The other artisans known to the Rāmāyaṇa are ivory-workers (*dantakāra*),[17] lapidaries (*maṇikāra*),[18] glass-makers (*kācakāra*),[19] cane-workers (*vetrakāra*),[20] weavers and tailors (*tantuvāya* and and *vastrakarmakṛt*),[21] makers of umbrellas (*chatrakāra*)[22], cobblers and workers in leather (*carmakāra*),[23] bow-makers (*dhanuṣkāra*)[24] and *māyūrikas* who were either tamers of peacocks or makers of peacock-feather fans.[25] The references to machinery are interesting. The ancient literature mentions a number of mechanical devices and prove that there had been a fair degree of mechanisation of industries in ancient India.[26] The Rāmāyaṇa speaks of mechanical instruments (*Yantropa-*

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1 NW II, 94, 17.
2 NW II, 94, 19; II, 91, 2; II, 91, 1.
3 NW II, 94, 13.
4 NW II, 91, 3.
5 NW II, 94, 19.
6 NW II, 94, 19.
7 NW III, 20, 17.
8 Shama Sastri: AK pp. 81-85.
9 NW II, 94, 14.
10 NW II, 94, 16, & 14.
11 NW II, 94, 23 & 26.
12 NW II, 94, 23.
13 NW II, 94, 17.
14 NW V, 56, 136; VI, 46, 106; BE VII, 8, 15.
15 NW VI, 68, 2.
16 NW V, 49, 42.
17 NW II, 94, 13.
18 NW II, 94, 12.
19 NW II, 94, 25.
20 NW II, 94, 15.
21 NW II, 94, 15 & 22.
22 NW II, 94, 12 & 25.
23 GE II, 90, 23.
24 NW II, 94, 21.
25 NW II, 94, 13. Cf. Monier-Williams: *Skt-Eng. Dict*, *sv.*
26 Cf. Bose: SREI II pp.207 f.

karaṇa)[1] besides a digging engine[2] and a machine which sends up a flag.[3] Mechanisation of warfare is proved by passages, which refer to weapons regulated by machines (III §§ 11-12). Mechanics (*Yantra-karmakṛtaḥ*) were in the party which accompanied Bharata on his march to bring Rāma back to Ayodhyā.[4]

§ 56. The extent to which painting and sculpture had developed in the days reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa can be gleaned even from the scanty data offered by the epic. There were professional painters (*citra-kārah*)[5] in Ayodhyā and *Citraśālās* (picture galleries) were a special amenity in the palace of Rāvaṇa.[6] C. Shivarāmamūrti thinks that the Rāmāyaṇa contains the earliest references to picture galleries; he says, "*Citraśālās' cedaṃ prathamatayā Rāmāyaṇe kathitā dṛśyante*".[7] The fact that there were professional artists and that there were galleries where their works were probably exhibited shows that painting as an art was well recognised and that it was sufficiently patronised by the public and the royalty. The general term *śilpin* seems to have included also the sculptors, who do not find mention as a separate class in the epic. The descriptions of the bier in which Vālin was taken for cremation and of the Puṣpaka of Rāvaṇa include those of carvings on them. Vālin's śivikā was decorated with beautiful motifs (*cārukarma*) by sculptors[8] and carvings of birds and trees also seem to have been there.[9] The Puṣpaka, too, was carved in a number of motifs, some of which have become traditional art motifs of India and Ceylon. *Īhāmṛga*,[10] with which it was adorned, may not refer merely to a kind of antelope or to wolves. As Shivarāmamūrti has argued it may be "an animal worked according to the fancy of the sculptors,"[11] such as the *makara*, *kinnara* and peacock motifs in Indian and Ceylon art. The demons, with earrings and large mouths, and the thousands of *bhūtas*, with large and wide-open eyes, who are carved as bearing the Puṣpaka[12] are the precursors of Bhūta-motif on the base of pillars and buildings; Shivarāmamūrti refers to a line of such figures in cave No. 3 of Nasik.[13] In Anurādhapura, Ceylon, such forms are seen at *Jetavanārāmaya*. It is quite likely that both wood-carving and stone-carving were known. Besides, the art of statuary was practised as is evident from the making of a golden image of Sītā to represent her at the Aśvamedha sacrifice of Rāma.[14]

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1 NW V, 1, 48; V, 70, 9
2 NW II, 91, 1.
3 NW II, 88, 9.
4 NW II, 94,12.
5 NW II, 94, 17
6 NW V, 5, 10; V, 4, 41; GE III, 61, 16; BE V, 12, 13.
7 Shivaramamurti: JOR X p.75.
8 BE IV, 25, 24.
9 BE IV, 25, 22.
10 NW V, 5, 25.
11 Shivaramamurti: JOR XIII p.90.
12 NW V,5, 40.
13 Shivaramamutri: JOR XIII p.90,
14 BE VII, 99, 7.

E. Trade

§ 57. "Trade is a natural sequel to industry. In the wake of a *sippa* must follow *vohāra*."[1] Though this observation of Bose is true to a certain degree it is not an adequate explanation of the origin of trade. The beginnings of trade may be best traced to the stage when the consumer ceased to be a producer; in a little village, where each inhabitant supplied the demands of his household—which were very few indeed—there is no necessity for any form of trade. But as society became more and more complex and specialisation set in as a result of the division of labour there grew a need for exchanging one's products for those of another. This naturally led to the barter system, which in all probability is the earliest form of commerce known to mankind. The epic does not give a clear account of this system; but its existence is undeniable. A glimpse of it is available in the price offered by Viśvāmitra for Vasiṣṭha's Śabalā; he wanted the cow for a 100,000 cows, heaps of silver, 14,000 elephants with golden girdles and ornaments, four pairs of golden and white horses in addition to 1010 horses or else one million cows.[2] The importance of the cow in the semi-pastoral and semi-agricultural society of ancient India was instrumental in establishing the cow as the medium of exchange within the barter system. The cow and probably rice had the biggest barter value in the eastern sector of North India while in the western regions as shown earlier (III § 33) the horse seems to have been in greater vogue.

§ 58. The development of commerce as the profession of a section of the population was dependent on the development of city-life and the growth and localisation of industries. The rise in importance of city-life meant that a portion of the people had to be engaged in duties other than economic production; besides, the artisans in cities produced things far in excess of the local needs. As such they had to be supplied with the essential raw commodities while their products also had to be disposed of. This state led to two important advances in the sphere of commerce, namely the coming into existence of a class of middlemen and the introduction of currency. The cumbersome method of bartering goods was replaced by currency probably because all city-dwellers were not producers and had no products to offer in exchange. In the economic system depicted in the Rāmāyaṇa the use of currency had come into being as was already discussed. (III § 34 ff.)

§ 59. Likewise the middleman, too, is found. The cities are described in the epic as full of merchants[3] (III § 10). They dealt in corn

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1 Bose: SREI II p. 253
2 NW I, 48, 35-46.
3 NW I, 5,5; BE VII, 70,11 and Cf. NW II, 94, 25.

(*dhānyavikrayinaḥ*)[1], fruit,[2] flowers and roots,[3] prefumes[4] and yarn (*sūtravikrayinaḥ*).[5] There were also butchers who sold meat.[6] We may discuss here an observation of Dharma that trade in lac, honey, iron (sic. for *loha*) and poison was prohibited in the case of an Aryan.[7] She arrives at this conclusion with reference to a statement uttered by Bharata in rebuking his mother, "He at whose approval the brother went away should for ever bring up his dependents by (selling, or preparing) lac, honey, meat, metal and poison."[8] There is no doubt that the context makes it clear that the trade in or manufacture of these articles was regarded as base; but it does not necessarily follow that they were prohibited in the sense that Buddhism prohibits sale of live-stock, weapons, intoxicants and poison.[9] As usual, those of higher castes would not have dealt with articles which were generally regarded as base; trade in them became a monopoly of the lower castes—the Śūdras. Hence they were shunned by the members of the higher castes—not because of any prohibition but because of the stigma attached to them. The Rāmāyaṇa shows clearly that the profession of traders was well-established.

§ 60. The cities were the centres of commerce and as such the merchants had their shops which were full of various commodities there.[10] The junctions of roads (*catvara*[11] and *śṛṅgāṭaka*[12]) seem to have been important as places of business in a city. Laṅkā is described as having *catvarāpaṇa* (shops at junctions);[13] *siṅghāṭaka* in Pāli texts is specifically described as a market-place.[14] Further there were *āpānaśālās*[15] (restaurants) where drinks were probably sold and places where food was served.[16]

§ 61. The Rāmāyaṇa knows of both internal and foreign trade. Caravans, with camel, appear to be referred to in Trijaṭā's account of her dream[17] and Kausalyā wails that she was like a caravan, which had lost its way.[18] Merchants are described as going from country to country taking with them marketable commodities.[19] Moreover the cities are said to be adorned by merchants who had gone to or had come from various countries.[20] But the Rāmāyaṇa, unlike the Jātakas, gives no details of the type of trade carried on between the various Janapadas within India with foreign lands. In fact it does not mention even a single of the trade routes known in other works apart from the fact,

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1 NW II, 94, 18.
2 NW II, 94, 18.
3 NW II, 94, 14 & 18.
4 NW II,94, 18.
5 NW II, 94, 21.
6 NW II, 94, 20.
7 Dharma: ABORI XIX p.140
8 BE II, 75, 38.
9 Aṅguttara Nikāya (P.T.S.) III p.208
10 NW II, 18, 12; II, 72, 53; 1,5,8.
11 NW V, 1, 47.
12 NW V, 49, 20.
13 NW V, 1, 47.
14 Cf. Bose: SREI II p. 254.
15 NW V, 7, 13.
16 NW II, 18, 7.
17 NW V, 21, 20.
18 NW II, 72, 30.
19 NW II, 73, 19.
20 BE I, 5, 14; VII, 70, 14.

already referred to by Bose, that the messengers from Ayodhyā to Girivraja seem to have stuck to the Campā-Puṣkalāvatī route.[1] But the discrepancies of the recensions as well as the difficulties of identification make the suggestion of Bose lose much of its probability (II §§ 15 ff). The centres of trade according to the Jātakas were such cities as Śrāvasti, Mathurā, Bārāṇasī, Takṣaśilā, Puṣkalāvatī, which find mention in the Rāmāyaṇa only in its last and late kāṇḍa—the Uttarakāṇḍa. On the other hand, these centres of commerce are being built in the days reflected in the Rāmāyaṇa. Therefore if the accounts of the origin of these cities as given in the Rāmāyaṇa are reliable the reason for the absence of references to the trade-routes may be that the Rāmāyaṇa reflects an era when they had not yet come into existence. But if the accounts are later inventions with no bearing on any historical situation, the explanation which can be given is that the places and the routes find no place in the epic story which deals with the sojourn of the hero in forests and his battles in Laṅkā.

§ 62. As navigation was widely known, there was also a sea-borne trade about which the epic however gives no direct references.[2] The material cited by Dharma to show that "there must have been an extensive sea-borne trade" is interesting. Probably working on the assumption that there are no interpolations in the Rāmāyaṇa she explains that the Pahlavas, Śakas, Yavanas, Kambhojas etc., mentioned in the epic were foreign merchants; "though some of these races...." she says, "might possibly have invaded India they could have been driven away by the powerful Ikṣvāku princes of the day. The bulk of foreigners must have been merchants."[3] And their mention in the Rāmāyaṇa is said to point "Clearly.....to commercial intercourse with their countries."[4] However ingenious her arguments are, they are not sufficient to prove that there were commercial contacts with some of these peoples before thay actually invaded Indian territory. The references to them in the epic are not convincing enough to establish such a theory. In fact they appear to be clear interpolations. The same criticism applies to the references to *Kośakārāṇāṃ pattana* (identified by some with China), Java, *Suvarṇadvīpa* (regarded by some as Java and Sumatra) and *Lohitasāgara* (located by some in the Erythrean sea)[5] which are cited in proof of extensive trade activities. These occur in an account which has generally been regarded as an interpolation (II §§ 53 ff). The literary records depicting the same period as the Rāmāyaṇa have clearer proofs of foreign trade.[6] Hence the lack of

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1 Bose: SREI II pp.289-290.
2 NW IV, 12, 22, (*nausārtha iva sāgare*)
3 Dharma: ABORI XIX p. 138.
4 Dharma: ABORI XIX p.138.
5 Cf. Samaddar: LEC p.80.
6 Cf. Rhys Davids: *Buddhist India*, p. 118.; Jain: LIJC pp. 114 f.

data in the Rāmāyaṇa does not necessarily indicate the absence of a sea-borne trade with the adjacent countries.

§ 63. The organization of merchants into trade-guilds is an important feature of the system of commerce that prevailed in ancient India. The Rāmāyaṇa refers to such corporations or guilds as *gaṇa*,[1] *nigama*[2] and *śreṇi*.[3] *Śreṇi* appears to be the commoner term for them. The epic seems to distinguish between the *śreṇis* of the city and those of the provinces for it refers often to *Paurajānapadaśreṇi*.[4] The heads of these guilds were called *Śreṇimahattarāḥ*[5] who were in all probability the same as the *Śreṣṭhins* (*Pāli Seṭṭhi*). The guilds exercised a certain degree of political power. They are invited for the consecration of Rāma;[6] Bharata tells Rāma that the *śreṇis* will look upon him as their chief,[7] inferring that the *śreṇis* could decide as to who should be their ruler. Besides, Bharata addresses the *Śreṇis* along with his *mantriparisad*.[8] But it does not appear that they occupied a place in the council of ministers. It is possible that they served as Banks and Joint Stock Companies, although the Rāmāyaṇa does not clearly refer to such functions of the guilds. But their importance in both trade and politics is evident from the references in the epic.

G. Transport

§ 64. Till recent times the only means of communication in India have been the "*dūtas*" or messengers. In the days reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa, too, they were employed to carry messages usually between royal families; it is quite likely that only the royalty and perhaps the nobility could afford them. In the epic the "*dūtas*" of Janaka bring from Mithilā to Daśaratha the message of his offer of Sītā to Rāma, in three days.[9] Bharata was asked to inform his father about his health through messengers;[10] and he sends a message to Ayodhyā informing Daśaratha of his intention to return home.[11] Although in later times a written message was carried by the "*dūtas*" in the period depicted by the epic, it appears to have been oral.[12] This necessitated certain precautions against misrepresentation and even personation, especially when the messenger was not known by the party to whom he was sent. As such some object which the receiver of the message would know as a possession of its sender was generally carried by the dūtas as an "*abhijñāna*." Sometimes it is not an article but a secret between the two.

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1 NW II, 16, 15.
2 NW II, 16, 15, & 27.
3 NW II, 16, 27; II, 94, 26; II, 124, 23.
4 NW II, 16, 15, & 27.
5 NW II, 94, 26.
6 NW II, 16, 15 ff.
7 GE II, 117, 16; BE II, 105, 11.
8 NW II, 124, 23.
9 NW I, 64, 1.
10 NW II, 1, 26.
11 NW II, 2, 21.
12 NW II, 62, 14 ff.

In the Rāmāyaṇa Hanumat carries with him the crest-gem of Rāma so as to testify to the authenticity of his message to Sītā;[1] likewise Sītā related to Hanumat a certain incident which took place at the Citrakūta mountain and which was known by the two of them only, so that Rāma might know that the message came to the right person.[2] This appears to have been a common practice in ancient India as is revealed in also the Meghadūta of Kālidāsa.[3]

§ 65. The ancient Indians were great road-builders. Their cities had numerous roads of various types; each city had a *rājamārga* (royal highway)[4] and a number of chariot-tracts (*rathavartma*[5] and *rathyā*). (III § 8). It is possible that there were roads connecting important cities of at least northern India. The *Tamasāmārga* which Rāma took to reach Śṛṅgaverapura might have been a well-known highway. Such highways appear to have kept mostly to the courses of rivers because they ensured a good supply of water to the travellers. The facility in tracing the route, too, was probably another consideration. A good road, according to the Rāmāyaṇa, was not only auspicious (*śiva*) and safe but it also afforded supplies of yams, fruit and water.[6] An interesting account of building a road is available to us in the Rāmāyaṇa.[7] It appears that the roads were merely clearings in the jungle—levelled up by filling pits and low-lying places and cutting off hillocks and uneven spots. The trees on the way were felled and thorns were removed. As shade-trees either the trees of the forest were left behind or at places where such trees were not found they were grown. Fordable places in rivers were made use of or else according to one verse thousands of fords were constructed to cross rivers.[8] The supply of water was assured by constructing lakes and tanks. It appears from this description that the roads were not paved; they might have been similar to the roads in some parts of India today, which are merely level stretches of unpaved land, marked as the road by two rows of tamarind trees.[9] The epic mentions a house, which was built on the way for Bharata but it does not give any evidence as regards the existence of way-side resting places—a common feature in Indian and Ceylon roads of the present time. Some of the decorated houses along the road, referred to in NW II, 91, 21, may perhaps have been of this nature.

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1 NW V, 35, 61 & V, 37, 19.
2 NW V, 35, 12-35; V, 64, 25.
3 Meghadūta: II, 50.
4 NW II, 18, 1; II, 44, 14; II, 36, 3; II, 29, 2; II, 7, 16.
5 NW II, 45, 12; II, 8, 11; II, 7, 18.
6 NW I, 32, 11.
7 NW II, 91, 4-21.
8 NW II, 91, 11.
9 Cf. Madras-Kanchipuram Rd. in 1951.

§ 66. The rivers were generally forded and a fordable river was preferred as is shown by the epithet "*Sutīrthām*" to Mandākinī.[1] But it seems that "bridges" were also constructed for the purpose. The word "bridge", which represents the Sanskrit "*setu*", is a misnomer because the so-called bridges were actually causeways or dams. The construction of "*setu*" for the purpose of transport is evident from the account of the "*setu*" built by Rāma to connect India with Laṅkā.[2] In other contexts it appears to be equally applicable to a dam built across a river to facilitate irrigation. The process of constructing a "*setu*" is one of damming by obstructing the flow of a river with trees, rocks and sand.[3] It could scarcely withstand a major flood.[4]

§ 67. There were also underground routes (*antarbhaumaṃ mārgaṃ*), one of which Aṃśumat is said to have constructed.[5] These were probably meant for strategical purposes.

§ 68. The Rāmāyaṇa mentions a number of beasts of burden. The ox who collapses under the load is referred to;[6] but whether it actually signifies a pack-bull is uncertain. The bull for the purpose of drawing a cart[7] (Cf. anaḍvāha) was more frequent. P. C. Dharma observes that "the transport of commercial goods was effected by pack-horses and pack-bulls."[8] Yet the reference given by her, namely VI, 131,3 of Madras Law Journal Press edition (=NW VI, 109,3) may also denote a bull yoked to a vehicle, because the term "*dhura*" refers to a yoke and also figuratively to a burden. Camels, too, were employed to transport goods[9] and it is interesting to note that the Rāmāyaṇa mentions a vehicle drawn by a camel.[10] Horses and asses were also yoked to vehicles.[11] The horses were also used for riding as it is shown by the division of the army into the four categories of elephants, horses, chariots and infantry.[12] If the horses were only yoked to chariots they would not have been thus distinguished. Tusker elephants, with bells, are said to have walked on the royal highways[13] and their use, as even now, for ceremonial purposes is evinced by the reference to the elephant, decked with rows of pearls and besmeared with sandalwood paste, who was to take Rāma for his consecration.[14]

§ 69. Vehicles used for transport seem to be implied by the term "*vāhana*"[15] while "*yāna*"[16] probably signifies any form of conveyance. Palanquins (*śivikā*) were a popular means of transport. At Ayodhyā

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1 NW II, 60, 33.
2 NW V, 96; V, 97.
3 NW VI, 6, 10; V, 90, 75.
4 BE II, 105, 5.
5 BE I, 41, 6. Cf. Ummagga Jātaka.
6 NW V, 32, 19.
7 NW II, 80, 30.
8 Dharma: ABORI XIX p.139.
9 NW V, 21, 20.
10 NW II, 76, 25.
11 NW II, 76, 25.
12 NW II, 116, 44.
13 BE II, 67, 20.
14 GE II, 12, 33.
15 BE VII, 88, 7; VI, 11, 22.
16 NW VI, 108, 17; II, 105, 35; II, 94, 6; II, 77, 23.

Daśaratha refers to them as a conveyance for the desert and forest areas;[1] and Bharata travelled in one from Bharadvāja's Āśrama to the Citrakūṭa mountain.[2] Vālin's corpse is carried in a *śivikā*[3] and Sugrīva uses one to visit Rāma.[4] Rāvaṇa too had many palanquins in his palace which were searched by Hanumat for Sītā.[5] And after the war Sītā was brought to Rāma in a palanquin carried by the Rākṣasas.[6] Carts were used for the transport of goods and also as a mode of conveyance of poorer classes like the ascetics.[7] A special waggon—an iron box with eight wheels drawn by 800 men[8] was utilized to bring the bow of Janaka.

§ 70. In cities with broad roads, chariots (*ratha* and *syandana*)[9] appear to have been a very common mode of conveyance. It is probable that they were mostly used by the royalty and the nobility. Chariots of ivory, gold, and silver with shields (*tanutra*?) of lion and tiger (skins?) are mentioned.[10] The chariots described as *Vaiyāghra*[11] and *Pāṇḍu-kambali*[12] are said to be ones covered with tiger skins and white woollen blankets[13] respectively. The parts of a chariot referred to in the Rāmāyaṇa are the axle (*akṣa*), the yoke (*yuga*), the seat of the charioteer (*nīḍha* or *bandhura*) and the pole of the chariot or the wooden frame to which the yoke is fixed (*kūbara*).[14] These are quite different from the parts of a chariot known to the Ṛgveda.[15] It is clear that the chariot of the Rāmāyaṇa was much bigger than that of the Ṛgveda because it was used, not for racing and warfare so much as for transport. The chariot designed for war might have been smaller and similar to that of the Ṛgveda. But those used as conveyances had seating accommodation for the driver and one or more passengers[16] and there was room for a guard to stand in the rear.[17] Chariots were usually drawn by horses—white ones being used as demanded by the occasion.[18] A number of horses were yoked to a chariot but the figure thousand is undoubtedly an exaggeration.[19] A special type of chariot called the *Brahmaratha* is also referred to, as being used by Brahmaṇs.[20] It is probable that they had some features which distinguished them from the war chariots of the Kṣatriyas.

§ 71. The rivers, which were unfordable, were crossed in boats or ships; besides ships,[21] which sailed in oceans especially for com-

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1 NW II, 37, 13.
2 NW II, 105, 37.
3 NW IV, 18, 6-7.
4 NW IV, 31, 21.
5 NW V, 4, 6; V, 4, 41.
6 NW VI, 95, 25 & 27.
7 NW VI, 44, 39; BE I, 31,17.
8 NW I, 63, 4-5.
9 NW II, 61, 9; II, 5, 16; II, 5, 35. II, 17, 25; II, 43, 21; BE VII, 46, 4.
10 NW V, 4, 22.
11 BE II, 16, 28; NW II,17,24.
12 Cf.Shivaramamurti JOR X p.85.
13 Shivaramamurti: JOR X p.85.
14 NW V, 43, 5 & 33; V, 42,29.
15 Cf.Piggott: *Pre-historic India*, p.280
16 Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Sītā and Sumantra go in one ratha: Cf.NW II,47
17 NW II, 17; 30.
18 NW II, 41, 10; II, 94, 1.
19 NW II, 16, 27.
20 NW I, 29, 16; II, 7, 4.
21 NW IV, 12, 22, VI, 26, 1; V, 34, 5.

mercial purposes, there had been a fair degree of navigation in the inland waterways. Viśvāmitra crossed Sarayū in a ship (*nāvā*).[1] At Śṛṅgaverapura there appears to have been a regular ferry; Rāma crossed the Ganges here in a ship,[2] while Bharata and his party were supplied with five hundred ships, marked with the auspicious "*svastika*" symbol, upholstered with white woollen blankets, and decorated with banners.[3] The ship in which Rāma crossed the Ganges is described as being firm, having a helm and strong cords.[4] A very advanced stage of navigation is reflected in the floating island, which was constructed to deceive and bring Ṛśyaśṛṅga to Campā.[5] Besides ships, rafts (*plava* and *uḍupa*) were used to to cross rivers. In an exclusive verse of the NW—which is apparently an interpolation—Vibhīṣaṇa tells Rāvaṇa that Rāma, with Sugrīva's army, was crossing the sea with ships and rafts.[6] Rāma made a raft out of logs and bamboos to cross Yamunā.[7] And Sugrīva asks the party sent to the north to cross Sailodā in a raft made of bamboos.[8] A peculiar vessel to cross a river in is the *ghaṭa* (the BE has *kumbhaghaṭa*) which was used by some to cross the Ganges at Śṛṅgaverapura.[9] The commentary seems to take it in the common meaning of "pot,"[10] implying probably vessels made of clay.

§ 72. Shipwrecks were known and cited in similes to represent moments of despair.[11] Stormy winds are known as the main cause of shipwrecks[12] while a case due to overloading is also mentioned.[13] Losing the sense of direction and the breach of the helm are also among the calamities which befell seamen.[14] There seem to have been some recognised sea-roads for Hanumat tells that there was no sea-route (*naupanthāḥ*) to Laṅkā.[15] Navigation provided also occupations for sailors, who were generally called "*Nāvika*" or "*Dāsa*", among whom the *Karṇadhāra*, the helmsman and pilot, was the most important;[16] a ship without a *karṇadhāra* is a simile to describe the grave situation of a country without a ruler.[17]

§ 73. An interesting problem as regards transport in the days reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa is that of flying. As aerial vehicles the epic mentions the Puṣpaka of Rāvaṇa and *Vimānas*. The former is described as swift as the mind, travelling where desired and flying in the air;[18] so is a *vimāna* called *khagama* (travelling in the sky) and *kāmaga* (going

1 NW I, 22, 2-4.
2 NW II, 53, 5.
3 NW II, 101, 16-18.
4 NW II, 53, 5.
5 Cf. GE I, 9, 8-9.
6 NW V, 87, 32.
7 NW II, 59, 4 & 12; BE II, 55, 14.
8 NW IV, 36, 83.
9 NW II, 101, 26.
10 Cf.Commentary on BE II, 89. 20.
11 NW IV, 12, 22, VI, 26, 1; V, 34, 5
12 NW III, 61, 3; IV, 5, 5; V, 20, 15; V, 22, 8.
13 NW V, 12, 3.
14 NW V, 14, 16; II, 86, 6; VI, 24, 26.
15 NW V, 70, 27.
16 NW II, 56, 13; II, 53, 5; II, 101, 22 & 25; BE VII, 46, 32.
17 NW II, 100, 20
18 NW VI, 102, 13-14; BE VII, 15, 37.

where desired).[1] Do these refer to actual vehicles, current at the time? It is true that the other contemporary works also refer to aerial vehicles.[2] But the references in the Rāmāyaṇa do not appear to be based on actual conditions because the ability to travel by air—even without a vehicle—is attributed to Rāvaṇa[3] and because the Puṣpaka is regarded a possession of Kuvera, a god.[4] Vimāna occurs in similes describing mansions and is not in any context regarded as man-made[5]. Trijaṭā sees an aerial palanquin only in a dream.[6] The belief in aerial vehicles may have been inspired by the mythological accounts of the gods and their miraculous modes of conveyance. Dharma thinks that "Critics may treat this as a figment of the poet's imagination. But it is impossible to deny (sic) their total absence."[7] What she means probably is that it is impossible to establish their total absence! With the data now in hand it is difficult to subscribe to the view of Dharma. Until further evidence is available it is safe to regard these as only a reflex of the mythological stories.

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1 NW VI, 103, 41.
2 Cf. Katthavāhana Jātaka
3 NW III; 54, 21.
4 Cf. NW IV, 36, 61.
5 NW I, 5, 10; II, 18, 17-18; II, 91, 21; Cf.III, 34, 13.
6 NW V, 21, 11.
7 Dharma:QJMS XXVIII p. 83

CHAPTER IV

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

A. The Caste System

§ 1. The dominant feature of the Indian social organization has been the caste system—an institution which has been jealously guarded down the ages by the Hindus with implicit adherence to strict rules of connubium and commensality. Caste, however much it is criticized by the modern social theorists, has been the governing force behind Indian society. It was not merely a priestly hypothesis but, as Mees points out, it represented "historical and actual social conditions in India and elsewhere."[1] The definition of caste as well as the problem of its origin have been points of much controversy among scholars. Ancient Indian literary records referred to the divisions of society under the term *Varṇa* which means "colour"; this had been an argument proffered in favour of regarding caste as a racial stratification caused by racial pride and colour prejudice. But the oldest theory recorded therein[2] about the origin of varṇas indicates a division of labour rather than racial exclusiveness or a social classification; as Betty Heimann interprets it, human society is "compared with a huge organism functioning through the balance and co-operation of all its members....It is expressly declared, however, that no part of the Whole may claim exclusive importance and superiority over the others. The undisturbed collaboration of the whole is what matters and thus all parts become equally necessary within a single system of co-operative labour."[3] There is, however, very little doubt that racial prejudice and the division of labour were fundamentally instrumental in the evolution of the caste system; but its preservation and intensification has been due to a code of law or Dharma, superposed by the hierarchy, as Mees thinks, "on a basis or standard supposedly cultural."[4]

§ 2. At the time reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa the caste system was a *fait accompli*. The four castes viz. Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Śūdra are referred to as definite divisions of society.[5] The popular account of the origin of the castes is given in the Rāmāyaṇa though with a few variations. Normally it is the body of Brahmā which is regarded as giving rise to the castes.[6] But the epic states that "illus-

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1 Mees: DSM p. 51.
2 Cf. Ṛgveda X, 90.
3 Heimann: IWP pp. 65-66.
4 Mees: DSM p. 71.
5 NW I, 7, 9; II, 118, 13; V, 29, 11; VI, 106, 37; BE I, 25, 17; VII, 70, 11; VII, 75, 18.
6 Cf. Manusmṛti I, 31 & RV. X, 90.

trious Manu emanated the men, princes, Brahmans, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras."[1] The next verse amplifies the theme stating, "from the head were the Brahmans born, from the arms the Kṣatriyas. Out of the thighs arose the Vaiśyas and from the feet the Śūdras."[2] As Muir has pointed out we have to regard the body out of which the castes arose to be that of Manu.[3] This clearly is a departure from the traditional account.

§ 3. It is interesting to note that the Rāmāyaṇa throws a faint light on the existence of a class distinction which went hand in hand with that of caste. *Mahākulīna* seems to have a greater significance than merely high caste; it seems to refer also to an influential class among the people of higher castes. Sītā is described as *Mahākulīnā*[4] and Rāma in calling her so seems to imply that she is not fit for forest-dwelling. It is difficult to understand Rāma's argument unless we take it for granted that he meant by *Mahākulīna* the wealthier classes who were not accustomed to less comfortable living. Again, *kulīna* is mentioned along with the *Rājanya*, *Vaiśya* and *Nagarapradhāna*.[5] If *Rājanya* is regarded as representing the Kṣatriya caste, *kulīna* may mean the Brahmans. It is quite likely that the three higher castes are named here though in a somewhat different terminology, but the inclusion of *Nagarapradhāna* in addition to the Vaiśya implies the presence of a class based on official superiority.

§ 4. The gradations of castes, on the other hand, are dealt with in greater detail. The people during the reign of Daśaratha are said to have honoured those of the superior castes (*varṇaśreṣṭhān*)[6], the Kṣatriyas tended the Brahmans and the Vaiśyas followed the Kṣatriyas. The Śūdras, with no jealousy, obeyed the three higher castes.[7] Further, the Kṣatriyas were led by the Brahmans while the Vaiśyas and Śūdras were loyal to the Kṣatriyas. There was no mixture either of castes or of their conventions.[8] Each caste had its own function which was its duty to the society of the time. And the ideal society is represented by the faithful adherence of the members of each caste to their respective functions.[9] And from the *Phalaśrutis* we find that the functions of the three higher castes were based broadly on the Vedic study and eloquence, the rulership and empire-building and the acquisition of wealth respectively.[10]

§ 5. The Brahmans who honour the gods and guests were undoubtedly the highest among the four castes;[11] and they were re-

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1 NW III, 19, 53.
2 NW III, 19, 54.
3 Muir: OST I p. 117.
4 NW II, 31, 2.
5 NW II, 93, 14.
6 NW I, 6, 20.
7 NW I, 6, 21; BE I, 6, 19.
8 NW I, 6, 22.
9 NW I, 7, 14; II, 114, 51; I, 1, 94; VI, 110, 9.
10 NW VI, 110, 30; I, 1. 101.
11 BE I, 6, 17.

garded as born of Brahmā (*brahmayoni*)[1] as well as beloved of Brahmā (*brahmā brāhmaṇavatsalaḥ*).[2] Viśvāmitra tells Brahmā himself that the status of *Brahmarṣi* attained through penance is rare.[3] Daśaratha praises the association with Brahmans;[4] this section of his speech appears to be an interpolation because it is unusually long an eulogy on Brahmans when compared with the brevity with which other subjects are dismissed. The Rāmāyaṇa makes it clear that a Brahman was to be respected not merely because of his birth; the caste-laws of the Brahmans seem to have imposed on them a strict course of life without which they become as ordinary as the other men. They remain Brahmans just because they wear the thread of initiation: this idea is implied in Vālin's rebuke to Rāma wherein he says, "you are dragged away by your sense-organs like a Brahman with (only) the sacred thread."[5] The supremacy of the Brahman caste appears to be based on the high standard of morality it sought to maintain; Viśvāmitra, who in an interesting way gave up his own caste and found admission to the Brahman fold, enumerates as the traditional qualities of a Brahman such virtues as truthfulness, success, courage, memory, erudition, intelligence, fame, forbearance, asceticism, restraint, quietitude, gratitude, heedfulness, an unstained conscience and being free of hatred to all beings.[6] He is advised by Brahmā that he could become a Brahman only after he subjugated his passions and hatred (*kāma* and *krodha*).[7] The Brahmans are normally described in the epic as learned, virtuous, abiding always by the Dharma, training themselves through asceticism and being eloquent in speech.[8] Asceticism has been a special *forte* of the Brahmans.[9] They are considered to be capable of determining the Dharma by their innate qualities.[10] Their honesty in fulfilling their promises is proverbial.[11]

§ 6. A Brahman, not attached to material possessions, performed the duties assigned to his caste by studying (the Vedas) and perfoming sacrifices.[12] These two functions were the Brahman's contribution to the Ancient Indian society; he was of the habit of studying the Veda[13] because it was his greatest wealth.[14] The learned Brahmans are described as those who have gone to the further shore of Vedas, Vedāṅgas and other sciences.[15] They were teachers (*gurus*)[16] and spiritual instructors (*upādhyāya*) and the latter are compared to ten ordinary Brahmans in the magnitude of honour due to them.[17]

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1 BE VII, 55, 18.
2 BE VII, 5, 15.
3 NW I, 59, 25.
4 NW II, 1, 20-23.
5 NW IV, 16, 60 (not BE & GE).
6 NW I, 16, 13, 15.
7 NW I, 59, 26-28.
8 NW II, 47, 14; II, 114, 5.
9 NW V, 90, 47.
10 NW II, 32, 19.
11 NW III, 11, 20.
12 NW I, 6, 14.
13 BE I, 50, 3.
14 NW II, 47 25.
15 NW II, 77, 18; II, 29, 15; VI, 108, 3; II, 1, 22-23.
16 NW II, 43, 53.
17 NW II, 25, 13.

They were the officiating priests at sacrifices and were hence called the "*Vājapeyikāḥ*;"[1] further their authority is cited on points of ritual.[2] The old and learned Brahmans were highly respected[3] and the term "*Vṛddha*", signifying "old", finds elucidation in the Rāmāyaṇa itself as "mature in three factors viz. knowledge, age and vigour[4] or else knowledge, virtue and age.[5] Their lore is upheld as authority; both Rāma and Sītā cite Brahmans in support of their arguments[6] and Kausalyā in impeaching Daśaratha says that the Dharma which she was upholding was seen through sciences by the Brahmans.[7]

§ 7. The Brahmans themselves are made to tell Rāma that he should honour them through his desire to ensure the welfare of his subjects.[8] There is no doubt that the Brahmans were respected by the members of the other castes.[9] Rāma tells Paraśurāma, "As you are a Brahman you should be adored by me."[10] The Brahmans were regarded the root-cause of prosperity,[11] and Rama advises his mother to live with her husband paying homage to Brahmans, well-versed in the Vedas.[12] Further, they along with the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas were held beyond censure.[13] The respect paid to Brahmans (*brāhmaṇ-agaurava*) by Rāma was of a high degree. Rāma squeezed or embraced the feet of Vasiṣṭha[14] and in the Uttarakāṇḍa he is made to declare that his whole kingdom and all that is his including his life are for the sake of Brahmans.[15] But it is worth while noting that he honoured only those Brahmans who were learned and old.[16]

§ 8. The divinity which the Brahmans imposed on their caste in the age of the Brahmans seems to have persisted at this time reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa, too. But the authentic sections of the epic, however, show no traces at all or only faint traces of this concept; the Brahmans are actually called *Bhūmidevas* in two contexts, one of which is from the Uttarakāṇḍa.[17] Daśaratha tells Viśvāmitra, "You are a god to me"[18] and Vasiṣṭha is described by Kalmāṣapāda's wife as "a chief priest (*Purodhas*) similar to a god."[19] The *Brahmadaṇḍa* of Vasiṣṭha, with which he punishes Viśvāmitra, also indicates the supernatural power which was ascribed to Brahmans.[20] The concept that the murder of a Brahman was a very heinous crime, for which retribution was considered to be exceedingly serious, was prevalent. Daśaratha repented for banishing Rāma as if he had murdered a Brahman;[21] and Bharata curses the one at whose approval Rāma was banished to acquire the sin of Brahman-murder.[22] Even Indra is said to have become guilty

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1 NW II, 47, 23.
2 NW III, 75, 39.
3 NW II, 20, 4; II, 4, 19.
4 BE II, 45, 13.
5 GE II, 1, 6.
6 NW II, 21, 34; VI, 8, 33.
7 NW II, 66, 35.
8 NW II, 47, 28.
9 Cf. NW V, 22, 5.
10 NW I, 71, 39.
11 NW II, 1, 21.
12 NW II, 27, 17.
13 NW II, 83, 3.
14 NW VI, 108, 64.
15 BE VII, 60, 14.
16 NW II, 3, 47.
17 NW II, 1, 23, BE VII, 53, 8.
18 BE I, 18, 58.
19 BE VII, 65, 30.
20 BE I, 56, 2.
21 NW II, 45, 11.
22 NW II, 83, 20.

of that offence.[1] It is also possible that causing damage to the property of a Brahman, too, was regarded criminal and sinful because the ministers of Daśaratha are eulogized as "not having harmed the property of Brahmans."[2]

§ 9. It is likely that the Brahmans had certain political privileges. The post of *Purohita* or *Purodhāsa* was held by one of them—by Vasiṣṭha in Ayodhyā and Śatamāna in Videha. The leaders of the twice-born (*dvijātimukhyāḥ*) who went forth with Bharata to receive Rāma must have been Brahmans.[3] The Brahmans had a say in the discussion over Rāma's consecration,[4] and the reign of Daśaratha is described as "liked by the twice-born."[5] They seem to have served the royal family as recipients of their gifts on important occasions. Whether the distribution of gifts among Brahmans was done with the idea of gaining merit or as an act of courtesy is not clear in a number of cases.[6] But the fact that Sītā takes a vow to the Ganges that she will make offerings to Brahmans shows that it had a religious significance.[7]

§ 10. Not all Brahmans seem to have commanded respect. The Rāmāyaṇa describes a Brahman who wore tattered garments, ornaments of grass, who was unshaven, who had applied ashes all over his body, who talked in an unintelligible manner and who was crude in his conduct. He appeared to be a fool and young Kaikeyī quite naturally was amused by his sight.[8] There were also needy Brahmans like Ṛcīka who was a poor householder with many children and hence willing to sell one of his sons.[9] The Brahmans had apparently thought that their outward appearance of haggardness should not be an excuse for others to laugh at them. The episode of Trijaṭa,[10] at whom Rama himself jeered, is probably a Brahmanical addition to establish the theory that the power of a Brahman was unrivalled even though he was only an ugly decrepit.

§ 11. The relationship between the Brahmans and the caste next in the order of precedence, the Kṣatriya, had been changing at various periods ranging from cordial amity to bitter hostility. At the period depicted by the Rāmāyaṇa there seems to have been a fair degree of amicability between them although the memory of hostility and rivalry is not altogether absent especially in the legends. The Brahmans and the Kṣatriyas appear to have been regarded equal in power and importance in their own particular spheres; they are together called the leaders of the people[11] and had taboos on food in common.[12] The

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1 BE VII, 85, 16-19.
2 NW I, 7, 10.
3 NW VI, 108, 14.
4 NW II, 3, 38.
5 NW II, 17, 19.
6 NW II, 33, 37; II, 34, 30; II, 35, 15.
7 NW II, 56, 20.
8 NW II, 11, 38 & 49-50.
9 NW I, 57, 12; II, 17, 24.
10 NW II, 35, 36-46.
11 NW II, 3, 53.
12 NW IV, 13, 17.

Uttarakāṇḍa summarizes the concepts regarding the two castes when Nalakūbara is called a Brahman in his virtues and a Kṣatriya in courage.[1] The legend of Viśvāmitra aims primarily to establish the supremacy of the Brahmans over the Kṣatriyas. The powers of the two castes are compared and the verdict of Śabalā, the cow, Vasiṣṭha and Viṣvāmitra is unanimously against the Kṣatriyas.[2] The gradation of the four castes which seems to be generally accepted in deciding the order of naming the four castes[3] shows further that the Kṣatriyas were relegated into a secondary position. The only context where a different order is followed (i.e. Kṣatriyas, Śūdras, Vaiśyas and Brāhmaṇas) cannot be regarded as signifying a new theory of the inter-relation of castes. This represents nothing more than a jumble, necessitated probably by the metre of the verse. An instance of most hostile relations between the Kṣatriyas and the Brahmans forms the central theme of the episode of Rāma Jamadāgnya[4] who being a Brahman slaughtered the Kṣatriyas many a time.

§ 12. The Rāmāyaṇa is a story of the Kṣatriyas. Hence it is about them that we find plenty of data in the epic. There is no doubt that the majority of customs, rites and beliefs depicted in it are essentially those which were prevalent among the ruling caste. The epic gives detailed accounts not only of the main function—ruling or kingship—of the Kṣatriyas but also of their way of life. The daily life, the entertainments and the military organization reflected in the Rāmāyaṇa belong to this caste. The Kṣatriyas (or the Rājanyas as they are sometimes called)[5] regarded the consecration as rulers to be their primary duty; Bharata tells Rāma, "This consecration of a Kṣatriya, by which ruling over subjects becomes possible is the first Dharma."[6] The duty of a Kṣatriya was to wield weapons[7] and he did so to protect the weaklings.[8] He who was born in a royal family had as his ancient Dharma the destruction of immorality and injustice.[9] As Rāma explains to Sītā, "A Kṣatriya carries his bow so that there is no sound of oppression."[10] As already shown (IV, § 5) the speech of Vālin implies that the Kṣatriyas like the Brahmans were expected to lead exemplary lives. He expresses his bewilderment at Rāma's conduct in killing him, which did not behove a Kṣatriya.[11] Vālin also states that the qualities of a Kṣatriya are tranquility, liberality, kindness, Dharma, truthfulness, virtue, prowess and the punishing of evil-doers.[12] The GE gives the list somewhat differently

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1 BE VII, 26; 33.
2 NW I, 49, 14; I, 51, 3 & 21.
3 Cf. NW I, 9, 77; I, 6, 22; II, 114, 51; I, 1, 101.
4 BE VII, 96, 7-8.
5 NW II, 93, 14.
6 NW II, 118, 23; BE II, 106, 19.
7 NW I, 71, 31; II, 99, 19; BE VII, 16, 47.
8 NW I, 19, 8, & 9; III, 10, 21.
9 NW I, 23, 16.
10 NW III, 11, 3.
11 NW IV, 16, 56.
12 NW IV, 16, 58.

as tranquility, liberality, pride, forbearance, truthfulness, constancy, steadfastness and the punishing of evil-doers.[1]

§ 13. The Vaiśyas do not play a very important role in the story of the Rāmāyaṇa, other than in accompanying Bharata to fetch Rāma back to Ayodhyā.[2] They were engaged in agriculture and cattle-breeding.[3] Their importance in the society of ancient India as the economically productive group is undeniable. They formed the bulk of the population and through their guilds probably exercised a certain degree of political power. Whether there were subdivisions within the Vaiśyas in accordance with the various professions they followed is not clear from the data in the Rāmāyaṇa. It is, at the same time, rather doubtful whether all the vocations described in the Rāmāyaṇa (III §§ 44 ff.), which were associated with economic production, were followed by the Vaiśyas. As the Vaiśyas seem to represent the bulk of the Aryan population other than the Brahmans and the Kṣatriyas,[4] it is likely that some professions, like work in metals, which the Aryans seem to have loathed, were followed by the lower castes, namely the Śūdras and the "mixed" castes.

§ 14. The lowest caste was known generally as the Śūdras.[5] But it seems to have been an elastic term for a number of despised castes. The Rāmāyaṇa speaks mostly of the Caṇḍālas, who were probably a subdivision of the Śūdra caste. The Buddhist texts place the Caṇḍālas as a fifth caste mentioning them after the traditional four.[6] They have been described as the progeny of a Śūdra father and a Brahman mother.[7] However, Ghurye finds that it is more plausible to explain the Caṇḍālas as a degraded group of aborigines.[8] In the Rāmāyaṇa a Caṇḍāla is said to be wearing a blue lower garment with a red upper garment or shawl, garlands from the cemetery and ornaments of iron (āyasābharaṇa)[9]; a verse found in the Northern Recensions describes a Caṇḍāla as being of a dark brown complexion with copper-coloured fierce eyes and wearing a skin of a bear and ornaments of metal (*loha*)[10]. These accounts tally closely with those of the Caṇḍālas given in the Buddhist and Sūtra works. The Caṇḍāla by his contact could pollute a member of a higher caste; so the sons of Vasiṣṭha say, "How can Brahmans of lofty souls go to heaven after eating the food of a Caṇḍāla."[11] Even the gods are said to shun the oblations of a Caṇḍāla (in this case offered by a Kṣatriya sacrificer)[12].

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1 GE IV, 16, 22.
2 NW II, 93, 14.
3 NW II, 114, 24.
4 Cf.Hopkins: CHI p. 260.
5 NW II, 69, 44; I, 1, 101.
6 Jātaka: IV p.303; p. 205; III p. 194.
7 Ghurye: CRI p.47; CCI p.53.
8 Ghurye: CRI p. 48; CCI pp.53 f.
9 NW I, 54, 11; BE I, 58,11.
10 NW I, 54, 12.
11 NW I, 55, 15.
12 NW I, 55, 14.

§ 15. The Niṣāda, too, is mentioned as a degraded group of people because Viśvāmitra cursed Mahodaya to become a Niṣāda.[1] As shown earlier (II §§ 68 ff.) the Niṣādas were a non-Aryan tribe which lived in close connection with the Aryans. Further, among the despised castes are mentioned the Pukkasas (=*Pulkasa*)[2] who are described as ugly, deformed and cannibalistic.[3] These lower castes were banned from performing any religious functions which were specially meant for the three higher castes. A Caṇḍāla is said to be incapable of approaching a sacrificial altar,[4] while a Vṛṣala (despised castes generally) could not recite the Sāvitrī hymn.[5] Śambūka, a Śūdra, in the Uttarakāṇḍa, was killed by Rāma for practising penance.[6] The restrictions in religious affairs imposed on the various castes are an interesting index to the gradation of castes. In an account attributed to Nārada, it is shown how the performance of ascetic practices was the monopoly of the Brahmans in the Kṛta Yuga, the best of the ages. In Treta Yuga the Kṣatriyas too entered the field of asceticism, Vaiśyas found admission only in the Dvāpara Yuga—the age when Rāma lived, and the Śūdras could think of becoming ascetics only in the Kali Yuga, the worst of the ages.[7] Thus the practice of penance by lower castes had been looked upon as a form of social degeneration.

§ 16. The admixture of castes is known to the Rāmāyaṇa. But no strong stigma seems to be attached to the resulting "mixed" castes. However, the ideal had been to marry from the same caste (*savarṇa*)[8]. But hypergamy, wherein the man marries from a caste below his, seems to be represented in the cases of marriages between the Brahmans and the Kṣatriyas as in the case of Ṛśyaśṛṅga's marriage to Śāntā.[9] The hermit-boy who was accidentally killed by Daśaratha is differently called the son of a Brahman and a Śūdra mother and of a Vaiśya and a Śūdra mother.[10] Ghurye is apparently making a mistake when he says, "Sumitrā, one of the four wives of king Daśaratha, was a Śūdra.[11] Firstly, the Rāmāyaṇa states that Daśaratha had only *three* wives. Secondly the epic does not call Sumitrā a Śūdra; the Northern Recensions, however, call her the "*karaṇī sutā*" of Vāmadeva.[12] Monier-Williams explains the term as meaning "an adopted daughter." Even if we accept the interpretation of the term given in the Sūtras, she is to be regarded as belonging to a "mixed" caste or else to an outcaste for "*karaṇa*" refers

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1 NW I, 55, 21.
2 Ghurye CRI p.61; CCI p. 66.
3 NW I, 55, 20. Cf. Pāli *pukkusa*.
4 NW III, 62, 19.
5 NW II, 92, 18.
6 BE VII, 75, ff.
7 BE VII, 74, 9-26.
8 NW VI, 8, 21.
9 NW I, 8,76. Cf. also BE VII, 2, 27.
10 NW II, 69, 44 and BE II, 63, 51.
11 Ghurye: CRI p.59; CCI p. 64.
12 NW I, 14, 4 (not BE).

to the offspring of an outcaste Kṣatriya or of a Vaiśya woman by a Kṣatriya or of a Śūdra woman by a Vaiśya.[1]

§ 17. In assessing the importance of the foregoing data on the caste system in the Rāmāyaṇa a question of utmost significance is whether all the references could be regarded as an authentic record of the conditions of the period, reflected by the epic. There is no doubt that the Rāmāyaṇa as well as the other epic and many other works of ancient India had gone through a number of complete or partial revisions at the hands of later redactors. But the Rāmāyaṇa unlike the Mahābhārata has absorbed less of the Brahmanical material in its earlier sections; whatever new material introduced by the Brahmanical redactors, has been limited to the Bāla and the Uttara kāṇḍas. The central theme and the main body of the epic has been less subject to revision. The general criticism that the Rāmāyaṇa evinces stronger priestly influence[2] is far too exaggerated. If there was a formidable Brahmanical intervention in the revision of the Rāmāyaṇa the theme which would have been most elaborated would naturally be the caste. Only the episode of Viśvāmitra in the Bāla Kāṇḍa and those of Śambūka and Indra's victory over Vṛtra in the Uttarakāṇḍa appear to have the laudation of the Brahman caste as their purpose. Some other short passages like NW II,1, 20-23 appear to be clear interpolations, but they do not represent a deliberate insertion of Brahmanical data in the epic. The episodes and these passages have been utilised in drawing the picture of the caste system in the foregoing pages but it has been borne in mind that the data from them cannot be employed unless they are already supported by those from other works in establishing their antiquity. Thus the accounts of the degraded castes included in the episode of Viśvāmitra have been taken into consideration because they are in agreement with the conditions depicted in the Buddhist texts.

§ 18. Moreover, the Rāmāyaṇa proves its freedom from Brahmanical influence in not attempting to defend the Brahmans at any time. It is true that the Brahmans were to be respected by all including kings but the epic clearly shows that it was not done merely because one was born a Brahman. The conduct is given a greater emphasis in the case of the Brahmans (IV § 7). This, no doubt, is a concept far different from that represented in the Brāhmaṇas and the other Brahmanical works. Although G. H. Mees would explain the exacting duties expected from the higher castes as a form of *Noblesse Oblige*,[3] the exact situation at the time of the Rāmāyaṇa has to be regarded as otherwise. The Brāhmaṇas which gave the Brahmans a very high place in society

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1 Monier-Williams: Sanskrit-English Dictionary p. 254 Col. 1.

2 Beni Prasad: SAIP p. 105; Pargiter: AIHT p. 93.

3 Mees: DSM pp. 129 ff.

are absolutely silent on the question of their conduct; the Brahman sought to claim superiority on the grounds of their being the sole upholders of the Vedic ritual. They formed the hierarchy, whose power was built on a sacerdotal and not a moral basis. The idea of moral superiority had not been predominant in the Western regions of Northern India where the Brāhmaṇas actually held their sway. It is, probably a special, concept of Eastern India, where the material power of the Brahmans was limited and where, therefore, the Brahmans had to maintain their supremacy only in the spiritual sphere; its consummation we find in the Buddhist and the Jain outlook that a Brahman was one who was superior in conduct and not merely in birth. The term "Brāhmaṇa" in Buddhism came to represent the noblest being the *Arahant*.[1] There is no need to trace any Buddhistic influence on the Rāmāyaṇa's attitude to the Brahmans. On the other hand it may be regarded as a feature of the social thought of Eastern India. This, too, is evidence in proof of the statement that the Rāmāyaṇa depicts the conditions of the East rather than of the West of India.

B. The Family

§ 19. The caste (*varṇa*) was the major unit of the social organization of ancient India. Next came the clan of *gotra* of which, however, we hear very little in the Rāmāyaṇa. It is quite likely that it was not a very important factor in society although it was an essential feature in the identification of an individual. For instance, Sītā asks Rāvaṇa, "tell me truly what your name, *gotra* and family are?"[2] On the other hand caste was never questioned; it may be that it was possible to ensure one's caste by knowing his *gotra*. It appears further that the *gotra* was indicated by a part of the name,[3] and that it was mainly contrived to reveal the descent. If the gotra name (i.e. the part of the name signifying the gotra) is what we have in names like Rāma Dāśarathi and Sītā Jānakī, the concept of gotras becomes a clearly personal affair having little or no bearing on the actual social organization. If it were so, there would have been no strict rules as regards the gotra of an individual because, it appears, the descendants were to be called by the patronymics relating to their illustrious ancestors. Thus Rāma is called not only by the patronymic Dāśarathi but also by such names as Rāghava, Aikṣvāku and (Kākutstha). The gotra thus is not a clear division in the social organization but, on the other hand, only a means of commemorating the distinguished ancestors.

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1 Cf. Dhammapada: Brāhmaṇa-vagga & Sutta Nipāta.

2 NW III, 52, 21.

3 Cf. BE VII, 66, 11.

§ 20. The family had been more important. In fact it formed the most significant social unit from the earliest known times in Indian history. The *Kula*[1] — as it was called — acquired its high position in the social organization because it was the smallest group which was self-sufficient and self-contained. But the family in India meant not only the husband and the wife with their children but also others like the in-laws. Originally when the Indian Aryans were wandering as nomads and when they had settled down in the Punjab Valley they were in all probability divided into family-groups, which had to be apparently large enough to manage their own affairs; the numerical strength of the family-group was thus maintained by including in it the members of three or four generations. Ramaswami Sastri quotes a verse which enumerates members of a family as father, mother, daughter-in-law, sons, daughters, wife, the guest and the chief occupant himself.[2] The inclusion of the guests, however, evinces the elasticity of the family. But it is not certain whether they continued to live together in the same house or in close quarters, as they probably did during the Vedic age. In the Rāmāyaṇa, however, there are references to members of the same family residing at different places.[3]

§ 21. In the society depicted in the Rāmāyaṇa the most important member of the family was the father; it is thus clear that the society was patrilineal. The children obeyed the father with the utmost respect. Rāma is called "attached to the father" (*pitṛvatsala*);[4] when Bharata had gone Rāma with Lakṣmaṇa respected their father as if he was a god.[5] Rāma says that his father is to be honoured as a god, for it is a nobler *dharma* (*garīyān dharma*)[6]. The Rāmāyaṇa attempts to establish the superiority of the father. Not only does the main story contain a case of utmost filial obedience in so far as Rāma decided to go to the forest without questioning his father's orders (*avicārya pitur vākyam*)[7] but the general attribute given to a father by his children is that he is verily a god (*Daivataṃ paramaṃ pitā*)[8]. Sons obeyed fathers and even Vaiśravaṇa surrenders Laṅkā to Rāvaṇa through respect to their father (*pitṛgauravāt*)[9]. The mother does not appear to have held such an important position in the family. Due to polygamy a child had to reckon the co-wives of the father as mothers. In fact Rāma calls his own mother and Kaikeyī alike as "ambā"[10]; but the actual relationship seems to be brought out by the term "*vimātṛ*."[11] Lakṣmaṇa is called *bhrātā vaimātraḥ*. It is natural that the children had greater affection for their own

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1 NW V, 80, 16; III, 1, 4.
2 Ramaswami Sastri: SR p. 175.
3 Cf. Bharata and Śatrughna live with their grandfather in Girivraja.
4 NW II, 19, 11; II 13, 51.
5 GE I, 79, 49.
6 NW II, 38, 25-26.
7 NW II, 19, 53.
8 NW II, 119, 26; II, 118, 5; I, 30, 19; GE II, 15, 21.
9 BE VII, 11, 44; Cf. NW II, 19, 66; II, 73, 9.
10 NW II, 20, 17.
11 NW II, 42, 36.

mothers, and hence did Daśaratha emphasize the fact that Rāma treated Kaikeyī better than Kausalyā.[1] The mother, too, was implicitly obeyed although not when the father's orders had to be preferred. Śakra stopped destroying Diti's embryo through respect for the word of the mother (*mātṛvacanagauravāt*)[2] but Rāma could not comply with the request of Kausalyā because Daśaratha had already ordered him to go into exile.

§ 22. The brother's position in the family set-up was equally important. The Rāmāyaṇa depicts in the character of Lakṣmaṇa the ideal of a dutiful brother; the mutual relations of the four brothers bespeak perfect brotherly affection. The value of a brother is vividly expressed in two verses put in Rāma's mouth "Whatever be the country there I find wives, other sons and relations; but I do not see the land wherein I may obtain a brother."[3] "Scanning the world of the living one may find a woman like Sītā; but never a brother like Lakṣmaṇa, a hereditary counsellor."[4] It appears that a common mother was not an essential factor in fostering fraternal affection for Lakṣmaṇa who was very much attached to Rāma was only his "*bhrātā vaimātraḥ*" (brother from a different mother, half-brother)[5]. Rāma regarded Lakṣmaṇa as his right hand[6] and brother, who considered each to be like one's self,[7] were very fond of one another.[8] A flagrant manifestation of such affection is the instance where Rāma speaks to his younger brother Śatrughna keeping him on his lap (*aṅkam āropya*)[9].

§ 23. The eldest brother was next in importance to the father in the family. Actually he is said to be another father according to the Dharma.[10] Sumitrā reminded Lakṣmaṇa, "Your eldest brother is your *guru* and is more beloved than even your life."[11] The rights of the eldest brother were never questioned by the younger brothers of at least the noble families[12] for they followed the eldest brothers.[13] It was obligatory on the part of the younger ones to execute the orders of the eldest[14] and to avoid retorting to him.[15] The eldest brother in turn had to protect the younger[16] and regard him, along with the pupil, as a son.[17] A discordant note is, however, sounded in the Uttarakāṇḍa when the grandmother of Rāvaṇa assured him that there could be no good brotherly relations (*saubhrātram*) among warriors[18] and when Marutta congratulates Rāvaṇa on defeating his elder brother in battle.[19] The representation of the brotherly relations of the Rākṣasas as not

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1 NW II, 13, 49.
2 NW I, 42, 22.
3 NW VI, 25, 7.
4 NW VI, 25, 16.
5 NW VIII, 52, 17.
6 NW II, 42, 31; III, 38, 11.
7 NW II, 1, 16.
8 NW I, 14, 25-27; II, 11, 55; II, 24, 24, II, 1, 13-14.
9 BE VII, 63, 18.
10 NW VI, 100, 27; BE II, 72, 33.
11 NW II, 43, 7.
12 NW II, 103, 23.
13 NW II, 6, 25.
14 BE VII, 62, 21.
15 BE VII, 63, 6.
16 BE VII, 13, 20.
17 NW IV, 16 72.
18 BE VII, 11, 14.
19 BE VII, 18, 11.

too cordial might have probably been a deliberate effort of the author or authors of the Rāmāyaṇa to emphasize the contrast between the heroes and their rivals. Also mentioned is the step-brother (*Bhrātṛvya*) whose cruelty or lack of affection appears to have been proverbial because Bharata wailed, "How may I do a despised act as if I were my brother's step-brother."[1]

§ 24. The epic is silent on the place of the sister in the family; all we hear of her is that she reacted most to certain situations. She wailed when her brother was separated from her;[2] and she was moved byanything pathetic. Hence the cow of Vasiṣṭha —Nandinī— who was being led away forcibly by Viśvāmitra is compared to a grieved sister, with her heart replete with sorrow.[3]

§ 25. The son held a unique position in the Indian family from very early days; the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa calls him "*jyotirha putraḥ parame vyoman*" (A son is the light in the highest heaven)[4]. The honoured place of the son was in all probability traditional; in the nomadic stage of the Aryans the young males were essential for the protection of the tribe as well as for such tribal operations like the raids for food and cows.[5] They were held in high esteem then because they formed the most active group of the society. But later on when the Aryans had settled down to less hazardous walks of life, the son still continued to be important but for different considerations. The Rāmāyaṇa emphatically states that "there is none as beloved as a son"[6] for he was one's life, existing externally (*bāhyaḥ prāṇa*)[7]. The birth of a son—especially the first—was a cause of great rejoicing to parents, for Daśaratha sought to express his gladness on meeting Viśvāmitra by comparing the occasion to the birth of a son to a childless one.[8] And when Rāma went into exile the people of Ayodhyā were so sorry that the mothers were not delighted by the sight of their first-born sons.[9] The son meant much to his parents. Sītā likens a moment of utmost grief to the news of the death in battle of the only son of a woman[10]. And when Kausalyā was disrespectfully treated by others she found consolation in the thought that she had a son like Rāma.[11]

§ 26. An interesting form of discrimination among sons—which has had a long history—is that the father liked the eldest while the mother preferred the youngest; the rest apparently were not so fondly treated.[12]

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1 NW II, 118, 4.
2 NW II, 49, 31.
3 GE I, 55, 9.
4 Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (Bibliotheca Indica) IV p.59.
5 Wijesekera: UCR VII, iii.
6 NW II, 80, 25.
7 NW VI, 28, 19.
8 NW I, 16, 23.
9 NW II, 49, 6.
10 NW VI, 71, 52.
11 NW II, 25, 7.
12 NW I, 57, 20. Cf. Ait. Br. IV pp. 59 ff.

Many sons, virtuous and learned, were desired[1] and hence Rāma expressed his greatest surprise at his father's conduct in rejecting a son for the sake of a woman.[2] To obtain a son both Daśaratha and Kuśanābha performed special sacrifices.[3] Begetting a son was generally conceived as the settlement of one's debts to the ancestors; Daśaratha says, "I am free from my debt to gods, Pitṛs (probably, ancestors) and Brahmans."[4] The Rāmāyaṇa, too, gives the traditional etymology of "*putra*" as "*Puṃ nāmno narakād yasmāt pitaraṃ trāyate sutaḥ*" (A son saves his father from the hell called *Puṃ*)[5]. The son's contribution to the happiness of the father in the next birth is evident in the statement of Daśaratha that he went to the world of Indra, being crossed over by his son, Rāma.[6]

§ 27. Not only did the son ensure his father's happiness in the other world but he was also expected to tend the parents in this world; Viśvāmitra states that fathers wish for virtuous sons so as to overcome difficulties (*duṛgasantāraṇārthāya*)[7]. The sons tended their parents in old age; and this duty had been very favourably looked upon by the children, for Bharata regarded Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to be luckier than he was in so far as they tended their dying father.[8] It is probably this duty that was referred to by the Brahman in the Śambūka episode as "*pitṛkāryāṇi*".[9]

§ 28. But it was not always that the sons were considered invaluable. In two instances—both occurring, however, in two interpolated legends—we are told of parents who discarded their sons. Ṛcīka volunteered to give Ambarīṣa his son as the victim in the human scarifice because he was poor and had many sons. But Vidyutkeśa and his wife abandoned their son so that they might enjoy themselves without interruption.[10] This latter case of throwing away children probably was a fairly common practice in ancient India. The Buddhist commentaries refer to some instances where the prostitutes did so.[11] Sometimes it was done when the child was born deficient; in the Jain texts Miyādevī asks the nurse to leave her blind baby on a dunghill.[12]

§ 29. The daughter was in disfavour most likely on account of the general aversion to women-folk in ancient Indian society. The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa which gives the son a very privileged position calls the daughter a misery (*kṛpaṇaṃ ha duhitā*)[13]. It is quite possible that the daughter was looked down upon in the earlier days because they

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1 NW II, 120, 13.
2 NW II, 57, 11-12.
3 NW I, 10, 49; I, 31, 1.
4 NW II, 6, 13.
5 NW II, 120, 12.
6 NW VI, 100, 9 & 19.
7 NW I, 58, 8.
8 NW II, 78, 28.
9 BE VII, 73, 8. Cf. NW II,35,38.
10 BE VII, 4, 25 ff.
11 Cf. Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā: Udenī Vatthu; Oldenburg: Vinaya I p.268.
12 Jain: LIJC p. 150.
13 Ait. Br. (Bibliotheca Indica) IV p.59.

were of little use to a tribe in its wars or raids and because they were to a certain extent a nuisance in these activities in so far as they themselves had to be protected and were thus a burden to men. But in the society depicted in the Rāmāyaṇa—especially its last kāṇḍa—the daughter was disliked on other grounds. She was supposed to be a hindrance to family honour inasmuch as it ran the risk of losing its respect because of her. Sumāli tells Kaikasī, "To be the father of a girl is a torment to all who desire pride. It is not known who will choose her in marriage. A girl keeps three families in suspense—the mother's family, the father's and the one to which she is given."[1] As such the girl who makes a bid to safeguard the honour of the family was respected; for instance Kuśanābha praises his daughters for not yeilding to Vāyu, "it is a great pleasure to me that you, my daughters, saved (the honour of) the family."[2] It is, however, impossible to conclude that the daughters were altogether rejected for Lomapāda volunteered to adopt the daughter of Daśaratha.[3] If they were actually regarded as "a misery" in the society depicted in the Rāmāyaṇa, Lomapāda would never have adopted her; it is not merely a case of natural affection here.

§ 30. Among the relations mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa are the paternal great-grandfather (*prapitāmaha*) and grandfather,[4] maternal grandfather, maternal uncles,[5] paternal uncles,[6] who seem to have been referred to as *Pitṛ*,[7] the father—and mother-in-law,[8] brothers-in-law who were distinguished as *devara* (husband's brother)[9] and *śyāla* (sister's husband)[10], the son-in-law (*jāmātā*)[11] and the daughter-in-law (*snuṣā*)[12]. The relations were generally treated with respect; in times of distress they were helped, as an exclusive verse of the NW states "a relation, whether virtuous or otherwise, should be honoured and respected in times of calamity. This is the highest conduct among people."[13] Relationship is an essential consideration in helping or betraying one as is implied by Indrajit's rebuke to Vibhīṣaṇa.[14] And even Rāma regards death to be better than being defied by relations.[15] It is, at the same time, interesting to observe that Rāvaṇa, in blaming his brother Vibhīṣaṇa for going against his wishes, denounced all relations emphasizing the fact that they were the worst source of danger. They are said to rejoice in the calamities of one another and to have wicked and secretive hearts. The relations defy mostly, it is said, the chief, the physician, virtuous one,

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1 BE VII, 9, 10-11.
2 NW I, 30, 29-30.
3 NW I, 9, 5.
4 NW II, 18, 9.
5 NW II, 72, 48; II, 35, 9.
6 NW VI, 52, 2; IV, 15, 46; VI, 54, 109.
7 NW I, 38, 7.
8 NW II, 29, 25; II, 42, 1; II, 43, 20; IV, 35, 79.
9 NW II, 42, 26; II, 59, 17; III, 62, 33; VI 92, 22.
10 BE VII, 23, 18.
11 NW II, 33, 3; BE VII, 17, 12.
12 NW II, 10, 6; II, 64, 13; BE VII, 26, 31.
13 NW VI, 92, 46 (not BE & GE)
14 NW VI, 65, 12.
15 NW VI, 81, 12.

the popular person and the hero.[1] The sentiments expressed by Rāvaṇa are very important in understanding the position of the individuals in the family set-up. That the family was not a unitary organization is shown by its elasticity. There were actually many families in the modern sense in each set-up. And as such jealousies and rivalries among them were not altogether absent.

§ 31. The factor which appears to have kept the family together and preserved a certain degree of cordiality is the concept of "*guru*" in the family. The families probably had their own chiefs who were called "Kulapati".[2] Besides, there were the "gurus" or elders who were held in high esteem. Once the Rāmāyaṇa difines the term "*guru*" as referring to the teacher, the mother and the father,[3] and the father is explained as including the eldest brother and the teacher as well.[4] A wider interpretation was given by Daśaratha who described the gurus as the elders, the virtuous and the learned.[5] It is clear that the Rāmāyaṇa means by this term all the elderly relations.[6] The "gurus" were loved, and Bharata who is called "*guruvatsalaḥ*"[7] states that the *guru* should be honoured as a god.[8] They were saluted[9] and were treated with respect.[10] So were the "gurus" expected to maintain a dignity in their association with the younger members of the family. There is no doubt that the organization of the family was based on this attitude to the elders, and this probably resulted in the restriction of the power and freedom of the individual. Thus it is not wrong to conclude that the social organization of ancient India had the respect to the elders (*gurugaurava*) as its corner-stone.

C. The Individual

§ 32. As already shown in the earlier sections the individual was a member of the family which, too, belonged to the wider division of the caste or the *Varṇa*. The concept that the duties of the caste were to be fulfilled by its members and the obedience to elders on which the family system was based reduced the individual to a somewhat insignificant place in society. The association of the individual with the family and the caste is noteworthy. Mees has worked out an interesting theory on the relationship between him and the Varṇa. He says "the theory of Varṇa stresses the import of the individual, yet is not an individualistic theory in the ordinary sense; and that it brings forward the social benefit,

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1 NW V, 90, 42-47.
2 NW III, 1, 4.
3 NW II, 124, 2.
4 NW IV, 16, 71.
5 NW II, 14, 6.
6 Cf. NW I, 12, 15; II, 29, 37; IV, 35, 79; BE VII, 26, 28; VII, 42, 28.
7 NW II, 27, 9.
8 NW II, 87, 10.
9 NW VI, 108, 63.
10 NW VI, 92, 42.

yet does not consider the group or the state to be of more weight than the individual. Thus it reconciles and balances somewhat opposed conceptions."[1] But this writer does not lose sight of the fact that in reality the individual was subsidiary to the caste if not the state. In spite of the fact that he formed the very constituent element of the caste, his freedom of both thought and action was sacrificed at the feet of the collective thought and action. The individualism of the castes, according to Mees' explanation of the above phenomenon "was lost sight of in India, Varṇa was generally taken in a far too dogmatic sense, the individual Dharma became largely subsidiary, 'mixture of Varṇas' was promoted and caste-dharma overruled Sva-dharma."[2] While the obliteration of the individual in the wider frame-work of the caste was conventional his negation within the family appears to have been obligatory. The Rāmāyaṇa brings out clearly the magnitude of the influence of the family on the individual. Rāma and his brothers conducted themselves not as individuals but as the members of a family, where the father at first and the eldest son, Rāma, after his death held sway. "The revolt of the youth"—a regular feature in an individualistic society is entirely absent in the epic. On the other hand, all move as if they were manipulated by a powerful machine which was, here, the Dharma, the moral susbtratum of the Indian society.

§ 33. Yet the individual did not become a mere non-entity. Within the scheme of the caste and the family he set the standard although to a greater part he had to adhere to the collective standard too. The action of each individual was essential to complete the picture of the social action. Just as moral standards were set for the castes (IV §§ 5 ff.), the epic shows that the individual, too, was obliged to follow an exemplary way of life. It is significant that the individual was estimated on the basis of the perfection he attained in this way of life. As such we find that the individual with his high morals and faultless conduct could win popularity as an individual—and not merely as the member of a particular family or caste.

§ 34. The individual surpassed the rest and established himself in society through his own merits. The epic represents in the characters of Daśaratha, Rāma and his brothers, Sītā, Sugrīva, Hanumat and Vibhīṣaṇa such individuals. Dharma was the main qualification of these individuals; they were just, adhered to the Dharma, lived constantly in the Dharma, and knew the Dharma (*dhārmika*, *dharmātmā*, *dharmanitya* and *dharmajña*.[3] They were free from sins (*vipāpman*) and virtuous (*śīlavān*)[4]. They were regared as elderly on account of their virtues,

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1 Mees: DSM p. 172.
2 Mees: *op.cit.*, p. 175.
3 NW II, 37, 16; V, 92, 9; VI, 35, 47; II, 42, 24; BE III, 16, 31.
4 NW II, 78, 51; II, 36, 14; IV, 3, 7.

conduct and qualities.[1] Not only were they possessed of many qualities but were praised for it.[2] The qualities, which seem to have made these individuals exemplary, are truthfulness,[3] wisdom,[4] erudition,[5] compassion and kindness,[6] honesty,[7] gentleness,[8] mildness,[9] restraint,[10] forbearance,[11] patience,[12] freedom from spite and envy,[13] the ability to recognize virtues (*guṇajña*)[14], gratitude,[15] modesty,[16] elegance,[17] goodness or purity (*sattva*)[18], majesty,[19] valour,[20] courage, dexterity,[21] and fame.[22] The individuals were also judged according to their religious and social conduct,[23] discipline,[24] restraint of sense organs[25] and their ability to discriminate among actions.[26] An individual with these qualities was regarded as a great man (*mahāsattva* and *mahātmā*)[27].

§ 35. The military power, too, contributed to the greatness of an individual as much as his moral standing. The strength, valour, initiative, and invincibility were also the special achievements of an individual.[28] In his relations with the others, too, an individual attained distinction through *finesse* and refinement of behaviour. One of pleasant appearance[29] as well as the person who smiles while talking,[30] who talks first to another, (*pūrvābhibhāṣī*)[31], and who speaks blandly[32] was liked. So was the individual who talks frankly (*anāvṛtakathaḥ*)[33] and inquires after the health of his associates and their dependents.[34] In society the individual was expected to do good acts (*priyakṛt*)[35], to look upon others as equals (*samadarśī*)[36], to respect elders, the erudite ones,[37] and the virtuous,[38] to help those who need assistance,[39] to discipline the unruly,[40] to know the likes and dislikes of others,[41]

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1 NW II, 37, 17.
2 NW II, 68, 2; GE II, 1, 6 & 15; NW II, 54, 4; GE I, 14, 29.
3 NW II, 36, 14; II, 47, 1; VI, 35, 47; V, 92, 9; IV, 4, 9.
4 NW IV, 32,7; VII, 2,2; GE II, 1, 6-8.
5 NW II, 78, 51,; II, 36, 14; VI, 52, 32; BE I, 41, 2; GE II, 1, 7.
6 NW II, 54, 7; II, 36, 14; IV, 47, 2.
7 NW IV, 47, 2; GE II, 1, 15.
8 NW IV, 3, 7; GE II, 1, 15 & 29.
9 BE II, 48, 30.
10 NW IV, 3, 7.
11 NW II, 36, 14; IV, 4, 9; VI, 35,47.
12 NW VI, 4, 25.
13 GE II, 1, 29.
14 NW II, 42, 24.
15 NW II, 42, 24.
16 BE III, 16, 31.
17 GE II, 1, 7.
18 NW II, 4, 16; IV, 13, 6.
19 NW IV, 13, 6; GE II, 1, 16; BE I, 41, 2.
20 NW IV, 47, 2; BE VII, 35, 3; GE II, 1, 13.
21 NW V, 92, 9.
22 NW II, 4, 16; II, 42, 24; IV,47,2.
23 NW IV, 13, 6; VII, 2,2; BE I, 32, 1; GE II, 1, 29; NW II, 54, 7.
24 NW II, 37, 16; IV, 4, 9, IV, 32, 7; GE II, 1, 15.
25 NW II, 78, 51; IV, 32, 7; BE III, 16, 31.
26 NW IV, 32, 7.
27 GE II, 1, 15.
28 Cf. NW II, 4, 16; IV, 47, 2; V, 92, 9; IV, 13, 6; VI, 4, 25.
29 BE II, 48, 30.
30 BE I, 32. 1.
31 BE II, 48, 30; GE II, 1, 7.
32 NW II, 3, 47; II, 54, 7; GE II, I, 13 & 29; BE III, 16, 32.
33 GE II, 1, 8.
34 GE II, 1, 37-38.
35 NW II, 3, 47; GE II, 1, 15 & 29.
36 NW VII, 2, 2.
37 NW VI, 52, 32; GE II, 1, 8 &30.
38 NW II, 14, 18; BE I, 32, 1; GE II, 1, 37.
39 NW IV, 3, 7; VI, 35, 47.
40 GE II, 1, 30.
41 NW V, 90, 35.

to be intent on the welfare of all[1] and to have principles governing his actions (*kriyāsu pratipattimān*).[2] The society enforced the individual to perform these duties by a threat of social disapproval for defaulters. And the Rāmāyaṇa shows that disrepute and insult from the society were dreaded even by the heroes of the story. Rāma himself was afraid of disrepute;[3] when wronged by being ordered to go into exile he wailed that he could not destroy the world in battle through fear of social calumny (*lokavādabhayena*)[4]. The corollary to this was the desire to attain fame. The fame of the individual is a special consideration in estimating him.[5] It was to be achieved for this world as much as merit had to be acquired for the next.[6] It is compared to a fragrance more pleasant than that of *Candana* and *Aguru*.[7] Rāma observes that happiness is gained in this world through fame,[8] that the efforts of all great men are for the sake of fame[9] and that fame is respected by gods as well.[10]

§ 36. The individual was bound by other considerations besides these. He was attached to his family and the safety of the family was dependent on him very often. He was loyal to his people.[11] As such his actions were to be modified to suit them as well as to ensure the safety of his personal effects and his associates. So the individual was expected to safeguard his family, wives and childern,[12] his friends[13] and relations,[14] his wealth[15] and above all his life.[16] The importance attached to the individual's life is brought out by a statement in the epic which implies that the individual's life could be protected at the expense of his wife, sons and wealth; of course in the Rāmāyaṇa we hear only that Prahasta was not willing to do so.[17] If, as this reference seems to reveal, the individual's life was regarded more important than both the wife and the son, it means that the individual in spite of his dependence on the family and the caste was still a significant factor in the social organization of ancient India.

D. The Āśrama System

§ 37. The society of ancient India was organized in such a way as to ensure the best advantages for both the society as a whole and the individual. As such the regulator of the social organization was the

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1 NW IV, 3, 7; IV, 13,7; GE II, 1, 8 &13.
2 GE II, 1, 13.
3 NW VI, 99, 17-18; BE VII, 45, 15-16.
4 NW II, 57, 26.
5 NW II, 66, 42.
6 Cf. NW II, 24, 4.
7 NW II, 65, 21.
8 NW VII, 47, 14.
9 BE VII, 45, 14.
10 BE VII, 45, 13.
11 Cf. NW VI, 65, 15.
12 NW V, 80, 17; II, 49, 8, VI, 33, 16 BE V, 51, 37; VII, 11, 44.
13 NW VI, 109, 3; IV, 6, 7; BE III, 38, 32, V, 51, 37.
14 NW V, 80, 17; BE V, 51, 37.
15 NW II, 49, 8 & 23; VI, 33, 16; BE V, 51, 37; NW V, 80,17.
16 NW II, 49, 8& 23.
17 NW VI, 33, 16.

Varṇāśramadharma which according to Ghose was a peculiar and distinctive feature of the Indo-Aryan civilization.[1] The laws of Varṇa (*Varṇadharma*) maintained the division of the society into castes and procured for it the services from each caste so that the requirements of the society were fulfilled without omission or overlapping. The laws of the *Āśrama*, likewise regulated the life of each individual so that the material as well as the spiritual requirements of the person were satisfied without emphasizing any single one of them. The ancient Indians had conceived quite sagaciously four main purposes of life, called the Puruṣārthas. They were *artha* (material prosperity), *kāma* (sensual satisfaction), *dharma* (spiritual duty) and *mokṣa* (liberation). It was, however, not the aim of all to attain liberation as the final goal of life. As such the first three were paid greater attention. In fact the Rāmāyaṇa enumerates only the first three as *puruṣārthas* in a number of contexts.[2] The omission of *Mokṣa* is an interesting problem as has been already shown in the Introduction (I § 4). The life-span of an individual was divided into four stages so that he might attain all of the *puruṣārthas*. However, it is not possible to associate the four āśramas with the four puruṣārthas because there is no perfect uniformity in the division; the first stage or the *Brahmacarya āśrama* is only a preparatory stage when no puruṣārtha is actually achieved. The next stage seeks to provide for both the *artha* and the *kāma*.

§ 38. Of the four āśramas the Rāmāyaṇa mentions only three although four āśramas are enumerated;[3] viz. The *Brahmacārin*, the *Gṛhastha* and the *Vānaprastha*.[4] The *Sannyāsin* stage is left unmentioned. The older literature usually mentions only these three āśramas.[5] The fourth āśrama was probably a later innovation—later than the period reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa. It is quite likely that it originated in a circle outside the orthodox hierarchy; the comment in the Bauddhāyana Dharmaśāstra that the system of four āśramas was started by an Asura called Kapila is worth noting.[6] But the antiquity of the Sannyāsin stage, too, cannot be denied for it is mentioned in the Muṇḍakopaniṣad.[7] As argued by Mees the Sannyāsa stage came into existence in order to meet a social need "when the Brahmans had developed into a caste, closed to outsiders..... Men (and women) of all castes could become Sannyāsins and, to whatever caste they might have belonged before, from that moment they became of equal status, and holy men beyond the differences of caste.[8] The absence of references to the Sannyāsin āśrama in the Rāmāyaṇa may be, therefore, explained as

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1 Cf. Ghose: IALC p.4.
2 NW II, 114, 64; BE IV, 38, 20-21; NW I, 3, 5, I, 5, 4.
3 NW II, 118, 14.
4 NW II, 104, 64.
5 Kane: HDK II p. 420, 422-24.
6 Kane: *ibid* p. 417.
7 Muṇḍakopaniṣad: III, 2, 6.
8 Mees: DSM p. 158.

due to either its non-existence at the time of the epic or the fact that the āśrama itself differed from the orthodox views.

§ 39. The Brahmacārin stage formed the period of studentship, during which, Daśaratha says, Rāma was troubled by teachers (*gurubhiścāpi karṣitaḥ*)[1]. Besides the period of studentship, the vow of celibacy was called the *Brahmacaryavrata*; and Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are said to have followed this in the forest.[2] The āśrama of the householder (*Gṛhastha*) is emphatically stated to be the best among the four āśramas.[3] The Rāmāyaṇa attributes this statement to the knowers of the Dharma and it is important to observe that the Manusmṛti tallies with this in stating, "According to the order of the Vedas and Smṛtis, of all these the householder is said to be the best because he maintains the other three."[4] The epic gives most data on this stage and they are dealt with under different headings (see daily life, marriage, etiquette etc. Chapters V & VI).

§ 40. The third stage or the *Vānaprastha āśrama*, too, finds abundant references[5] in the Rāmāyaṇa because Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa with Sītā undertook to lead a life similar to that of the Vānaprasthas and because they met many of the Vānaprasthas in their wanderings in the Daṇḍakāraṇya. Those met by Rāma were usually Brahmans; but the epic refers to the common practice of kings at that time to abdicate from their thrones and retire to the forest.[6] The Vānaprasthas were in all respects ascetics (VIII § 107) and lived in a simple manner which suited their forest environment as well as their purpose of spiritual endeavour (III §§ 26 ff.).

§ 41. The Rāmāyaṇa does not show that the members of all castes were expected to go through all the āśramas. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are represented as going through only the first two stages if we may ignore their enforced 'Vānaprastha' life in exile. It is quite likely that only the Brahmacārin and Gṛhastha were of importance in so far as everyone went through them. The other stages were probably left to the discretion of the individual. It is evident from the Rāmāyaṇa as well as from other works of the ancient literature that the āśrama system was an ideal to be followed by those who could of the higher castes but there was no compulsion whatsoever or strict adherence to the system.

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1 NW II, 14, 10.
2 NW V, 29, 12; VI, 35, 31.
3 NW II, 118, 14.
4 Manusmṛti: VI, 89.
5 NW II, 70, 20; III, 7, 18; III, 16, 25; BE II, 64, 23.
6 NW II, 23, 29; I, 67, 13; BE VII, 59, 17; VII, 78, 7.

CHAPTER V

THE DAILY LIFE

A. Food and Drinks

§ 1. The Rāmāyaṇa deals with the Kṣatriyas mainly and with them in the Gṛhastha stage of life. The forest-dweller, too, finds occasion a reference. As such the daily life depicted in the epic has to be regarded primarily as that led by the Kṣatriyas of the Gṛhastha stage and the Vānaprasthas. Due to the fact that in the ancient literature less attention was paid to the realistic representation of life than to imaginary accounts and idealistic models, the picture of the daily life gleanable from it is no doubt faint. It is with much difficulty—by gathering together the data from the various aspects of literature that it is possible for one to know how actually the ancient Indian led his life. The data obtainable in the Rāmāyaṇa, therefore, cannot be regarded as representing every aspect of life in ancient India. On the other hand, they are useful in being both complementary and supplementary to the evidence available in other works of the time. Even the Jātakas which are generally a better source for the conditions of the ordinary man are only partially helpful in this subject; as Mehta says, "We have no statistics, no figures whatsoever. We may, however, get a glimpse of the average standard of life by reading between the lines of the stories."[1] The variation in the standards of life in each class and each place or even each family might have been the main reason for the inadequate reflection of the daily life in the literature.

§ 2. To deal firstly with the primary need of life—food—the Rāmāyaṇa, like the Buddhist and the Jain works, regards food to be of four types viz. *Anna* (eatable), *pāna* (drink), *coṣya* (food to be sucked) and *lehya* (those to be licked)[2]. But there was apparently no finality in this grouping because the epic itself gives a different one as *Anna* (food to be eaten without mastication), *bhakṣya* (food to be eaten with mastication) *lehya* and *coṣya*.[3] More important is the division, where *anna* seems to be regarded as the general term for food which is sub-divided into *bhakṣya*, *bhojya*, *coṣya* and *lehya*. Besides these were drinks.[4] This agrees to a certain degree with the list given in the Buddhist works

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1 Metha: PBI p. 239.
2 NW I, 48, 24; GE I, 53, 23; BE I, 52, 23.
3 NW II, 99, 16.
4 NW II, 51, 13-14; II, 104, 20.

as *Khādya* (=*bhakṣya;* Pāli: *Khajja*), *Bhojya* (Pāli *bhojja*), *Lehya* (Pāli *leyha*) and *Peya* (=*pāna;* Pāli *peyya*)[1]. The Jain works differ considerably in this respect; they, too, record four types of food as *asana* (food), *pāṇa* (drink) *khāima* (eatable) and *sāima* (relishable)[2]. Included in these types were a wide variety of preparations. These seem to have been taken in two principal meals, *prātarāśana* (breakfast) and lunch which was taken in the afternoon.[3] The term *prāśanīya*,[4] which is of course not found in the NW, cannot in anyway be interpreted as a breakfast although P. C. Dharma seems to surmise that "Daśaratha, too, probably had a breakfast."[5] The commentators are no doubt correct in explaining it as a type of gargle because the attendants, who go to wake Daśaratha would rather carry some water for him to rinse his mouth and clothes to dress up rather than a breakfast.

§ 3. The forest-dwellers were satisfied with a very simple fare. Cakes of *Iṅguda* (*Terminalia Catappa*, Indian Almond)—*Iṅgudapiṇyāka*—are said to be the food of the ascetics.[6] Yams and fruits too formed principal items of their diet (III § 27). Thus in Agastya's hermitage there were yams and roots, medicinal herbs and rice etc. prepared for food.[7] Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā spent three nights eating just the roots of the lotus (*mṛṇāla*)[8].

§ 4. In cities the people seem to have been more fortunate; and cities as we have already seen (III § 10) were always described as replete with corns. Various grains were utilized as food. The epic mentions rice (*śāli* and taṇḍula)[9] as the most important along with (*tila*)[10], chick-pea (*caṇaka*), horse-gram (*kulattha*) and beans (*māṣa*).[11] Rice was taken boiled (*odana* or *bhakta*)[12] and as *pāyāsa*, i.e. prepared as a pudding with milk.[13] The latter with molasses[14] seems to have been preferred, as it is even today in India and Ceylon. Fried paddy (*lājā*) also appears to have been consumed,[15] while boiled rice was eaten with curries (*sūpa*)[16]. Cakes or bread made out of flour (*apūpa* or *pūpa*) were other forms in which grains were eaten.[17] These were accompanied by milk, curd and buttermilk.[18] Besides, they consumed sugar-cane and a number of preparations out of molasses (*gauḍa*)[19]; the emphasis on sweets in the ancient Indian diet is borne out by the number of specialised confectioners, whom we have mentioned in an earlier Chapter (III § 50). Fruits were an important item; the acrid fruits consumed by the

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1 Dīgha Nikāya (P.T.S.) III pp.151-152
2 Jain: LIJC p. 123.
3 Cf. Sutta Nipāta (P.T.S.) p. 68 & Mehta: PBI p. 239.
4 BE II, 65, 9.
5 Dharma: QJMS XXVIII p. 12.
6 NW II, 117, 14.
7 BE VII, 82, 3.
8 NW II, 56, 38.
9 NW I, 5, 16; BE VII, 91, 19.
10 BE VII, 91, 19.
11 BE VII, 91, 20.
12 NW I, 48, 27; BE V, 36, 41.
13 NW II, 104, 54; III, 63, 23-24.
14 Cf. NW II, 104, 72.
15 NW I, 48, 26.
16 NW II, 104, 69.
17 NW I, 48, 28; & II, 104, 69.
18 NW II, 104, 71; I, 48, 28.
19 NW II, 104, 57; I, 48, 29.

forest-dweller were dealt with earlier (III § 27). Among the fruits commonly eaten are mentioned wood-apples (*bilva* and *kapittha*), jak (*panasa*), *āmalaka* (*Emblica myrobalan;* Sinhalese *Nelli*), jujube (*jambu*) and mangoes.[1] Whether betel was chewed is not certain; the reference to betel-nut (*kāṇḍakārāḥ*)[2] in a most unexpected context may be interpreted as implying its use for chewing. But it is not possible to rely very much on this reference because it is mentioned along with the men of various professions who accompanied Bharata in the march to Citrakūta; it is quite likely that the word refers to some craftsman.

§ 5. The Aryans of ancient India were not altogether vegetarians. Their diet was a mixed one; they ate fish which was caught in inland lakes and rivers by fishermen (III § 49)[3] as was offered to Bharata and his party by Guha (III § 32). Meat too was consumed quite widely.[4] Not only did Rāma say that animals are killed by men for their flesh[5] but also he killed many animals—deer, wild boar, antelope, etc.,—for food during his sojourn in the forest.[6] Meat was eaten with relish, and a verse which describes the meal of Rāma and Sītā states, "He sat on the rock tempting Sītā with meat (saying) this is pure, this is tasty and this is well cooked by fire."[7] In Bharadvāja's hermitage Bharata's army was supplied with venison, mutton, pork and flesh of the peacock and the snipe (tittira)[8], while in the drinking ground of Rāvaṇa's palace, Hanumat saw remnants of venison, beef, pork,[9] flesh of peacocks and fowl,[10] fish, birds, buffaloes and goats.[11] Likewise, Kumbhakarṇa consumed a large quantity of venison, beef and pork and drank blood.[12] The degraded people, the Muṣṭikas, according to the BE ate the flesh of the dogs (*śvamāṃsa*)[13]; but according to the NW the people are called Pukkasa and are said to eat their own flesh (*svamāṃsa*)[14]. It is apparent from a statement of Vālin that there was some sort of a taboo on certain types of meat; animals with five nails are generally not killed for food, it states, and the only five-nailed animals, that can be eaten by a Brahman or a Kṣatriya, are hares, porcupines, iguanas, *Sedhā* (also a porcupine?) and tortoises.[15] The GE amplifies this statement to include the animals whose flesh should not be eaten by the members of the higher castes: viz., jackals, crocodiles, monkeys, *kinnaras* and human beings.[16]

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1 NW II, 104, 30.
2 NW II, 94. 22.
3 Cf. Dharma QJMS XXVIII p. 9.
4 NW II, 104, 21 & 55; III, 79, 9; BE V, 36, 41; VII, 42, 19.
5 NW III, 48, 22.
6 NW II, 59, 19; III, 49, 21; II, 109, 35; BE II, 52, 102.
7 BE II, 96, 1-2.
8 NW II, 104, 68-69.
9 NW V, 6, 12.
10 NW V, 6, 13.
11 NW V, 6, 15.
12 NW VI, 38, 32 & 78.
13 BE I, 59, 19; Cf. Dharma: QJMS XXVIII p. 7.
14 NW I, 55, 20.
15 NW IV, 13 17.
16 GE IV, 16, 32.

§ 6. Although the Vānaras are generally depicted as vegetarians, the Brahmans were actually not. The concept that "a purely vegetarian diet is an indication of spiritual progress and an advanced culture"[1] is a later development in India. Even the ascetic Brahmans were not strict vegetarians.[2] Although their usual fare consisted of vegetables, they did not abstain from meat-eating as a principle of either religious or social significance. In fact Agastya is represented as eating rams and he says, "I am able to eat comfortably even one whole ram at a Śrāddha ceremony."[3] There seems to have been no ban on meat-eating by Brahmans even at the time of Bhavabhūti for his Uttararāmacarita depicts Vasiṣṭha as eating a tawny calf; but a certain degree of displeasure on it is recorded in the same Miśraviṣkambhaka.[4] Further, Vālin's statement specifically mentions the animals whose flesh could be eaten by Brahmans. It appears, however, that at certain times people abstained from meat as well as from liquor due to bereavements and other calamities —as it is even today in some parts of India and Ceylon—for Hanumat tells Sītā that since her separation Rāma did not eat any meat or drink any liquor.[5]

§ 7. Cooking was developed as an art as is shown by the number of specialised cooks mentioned in the epic. (III § 50); it is referred to as the science of the Superintendent of the Royal kitchen i.e. *Pauragavaśāstra*. Food was generally spiced and salted, and *rāgakhāṇḍava*, which is said to be a kind of sweetmeat, is explained in the commentary as also the essence of grapes, pomegranates etc.[6] Six tastes are, known,[7] and they are enumerated as sweet, sour, salt, pungent, bitter and astringent.[8] Meat was roasted on spits and also cooked in pots hence the preparations are called *śūlyapaiṭhara*.[9] A special meat-preparation with curd and curry leaves (*suvarcala?*) is also referred to.

§ 8. A wide variety of drink was used by the people of the period depicted by the Rāmāyaṇa. Besides water they consumed the juices of fruit and sugar-canes[10] and honey.[11] More references are, however, found to spirituous liquor which appears to have been very freely drunk. There were taverns (*āpānaśālā*) (III § 10) and the palaces of kings had their own drinking grounds.[12] Surā was drunk in Ayodhyā and Laṅkā; there were habitual drunkards who were called *surāpās*.[13] A kingdom devoid of wealth is compared to *surā* with its "spirituous

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1 Dharma: QJMS XXVIII p.2.
2 But Cf. Dharma: QJMS XXVIII p.2.
3 GE III, 16, 24.
4 Uttararāmacarita: IV Miśraviṣkambhaka.
5 NW V, 33, 5.
6 NW V, 6. 19-20; Commentary on BE V, 11, 18.
7 NW I, 48, 23.
8 Monier-Williams: Sanskrit-English Dictionary p.869. s. v. v. rasa.
9 NW VI, 38, 79.
10 BE I, 5, 17; NW II, 104, 15.
11 Cf. NW V, 59.
12 NW V, 6, 2.
13 NW II, 104, 21 & 54.

part" drunk (*pītamaṇḍām surām iva*)[1] and a Rākṣasī describes *surā* as the destroyer of all sorrows (*sarvaśokavināśinī*)[2]. *Maireya* appears to be another type of intoxicant; and *sura* and *maireya* appear to have been traditionally connected as they are usually mentioned together not only in Brahmanical but also in Buddhist works.[3] Other liquors called *Vāruṇī* and *sīdhu* were also consumed,[4] while *āsavas* or spirituous extracts from molasses, honey, flowers and fruits were found in plenty in Rāvaṇa's drinking grounds.[5] It is interesting to note that honey (*madhu*) had been drunk as an intoxicant because not only are the *Vānaras* who returned with the news of Sītā described as being drunk by consuming honey from Sugrīva's grove[6] but also abstinence from it in the case of Rāma during his separation from Sītā is especially mentioned as a virtue.[7]

§ 9. Drinking was so common a practice that even women are said to have consumed liquor in public; not only does the Rāmāyaṇa describe women under the influence of liquor[8] but also in a verse of the Uttarakāṇḍa it describes how Rāma took Sītā by the hand and made her drink some liquor.[9] Although the evil effects of intoxicants were known and although they were considered to be detrimental to the attainment of *Artha*, *kāma* and *dharma* according to a verse in the BE,[10] it is anything but possible to interpret the data of the Rāmāyaṇa as advocating temperance. P. C. Dharma seems to have exaggerated the situation when she states, "It is interesting to note that teetotallers like Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Bharata existed even in those days of intense drinking. All the three condemned drink: and they are not described as drinking anywhere in the text."[11] It is quite clear that the Rāmāyaṇa does not specifically describe Rāma as a teetotaller; nor are any other characters so described. The verse which states that Rāma refrained from both meat and liquor during his separation from Sītā implies that Rāma was of the habit of taking liquor before.[12] Hanumat appears to indicate that he would not have been amazed to see Sītā drunk if not for the fact that she was separated from Rāma.[13] Further, if the Rāmāyaṇa held temperance as an ideal it is in no way possible to expect a passage describing not merely Rāma drinking but getting Sītā, too, to drink[14] especially in the Uttarakāṇḍa, where Rāma is characterized as an ideal ruler far more emphatically than in the other kāṇḍas. As observed by Dharma it is likely that the Brahmans were forbidden to

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1 NW II, 39, 12.
2 NW V, 19, 49.
3 NW II, 104, 15; IV, 26, 8; and Cf. Pāli *Surāmeraya*.
4 NW II, 54, 12; V, 6, 24.
5 NW V, 6, 23; V, 4, 47; BE V, 11, 23.
6 NW V, 59, 1-2; 8-28.
7 NW V, 33, 5.
8 NW V, 6, 6; IV, 23, 19; BE VII, 42, 21; IV, 23, 19.
9 BE VII, 42, 18-19.
10 BE IV, 33, 46.
11 Dharma: QJMS XXVIII p.19.
12 NW V, 33. 5.
13 NW V, 6, 3.
14 BE VII, 42, 18-19

drink;[1] but they appear to have been no strict teetotallers for they are described in two similes as being utterly bewildered due to intoxication and as accusing themselves.[2] It is possible that the Brahmans were usually teetotallers and whenever they drank they became a source of much ridicule. The BE records an exceptional use of liquor in enumerating a thousand pots of *surā* among the offerings promised by Sītā to Ganges.[3] This use of liquor in religious ceremonies may be quite likely reminiscent of the offerings of Soma in Vedic sacrifices.

B. Dress and Oranments

§ 10. As Mehta has shown with six references to the Vedic literature,[4] dress in ancient India has been the main concern of the fair sex. In the Rāmāyaṇa, however, women are not specifically mentioned as desiring good clothing although they are described as wearing the best and most valuable garments.[5] Clothes were popular articles of gift not only to women but also to men.[6]

§ 11. The dress of the Indians reflected in the Rāmāyaṇa was a simple one consisting of only two pieces of cloth, which were untailored; while the Rāmāyaṇa describes Garuḍa and Mantharā as wearing a pair of garments (*Vasānorajasī vastre*)[7], the Buddhist texts mention a pair of clothes as forming a suit (*sāṭakayugaṃ*)[8]. One was wrapped around the waist covering the lower part of the body while the other was used to cover the upper part.[9] The latter was called the *Uttarīya*[10] and appears from the figures of Bharhut to have been worn on the left shoulder.[11] This was the dress of both the men and the women. Though the Rāmāyaṇa does not specifically mention any form of head-dress worn by the main characters other than the matted hair of the forest-dwellers, it is quite likely that the men, at least the servants and soldiers wore turbans (*uṣṇīṣa*)[12], in which case the suits of men have to be considered as consisting of three pieces of cloth; as Rhys Davids conjectured in the case of the Mallas of Kusinārā the dress of males consisted of "a suit of apparel of two or, at the outside, of three of these—one to wrap around the loins, one to throw over the shoulders and one to use as a turban."[13] Its significance, though at a later date, is well borne out by the sculptures of Bharhut[14] and the Buddhist texts speak of barbers

1 Dharma: QJMS XXVIII p.16.
2 NW 11, 84, 4; II, 37, 26.
3 BE II, 52, 89.
4 Mehta: PBI p.292 fn.
5 NW II, 66, 15; II, 81, 7; V, 15, 9; GE I, 9, 16.
6 NW II, 35, 5 & 7; V, 15, 9.
7 NW VI, 28, 16; II, 12, 13.
8 Mehta: PBI p.239.
9 NW II, 50, 27.
10 NW IV, 4, 30; V, 10, 46.
11 Cf. Bharhut Tope: Plate LXVII.
12 NW VI, 95, 42.
13 Rhys Davids: *Dialogues of the Buddha* II p.180 fn.
14 Cf. Bharhut Tope: Plate XXIV, figure 2 and Plate LXVII.

and shampooers who were "especially skilled in arranging the elaborate turbans worn by the wealthier classes."[1]

§ 12. Although the full suit consisted of at least the two pieces of cloth, mentioned above, it is probable that on certain occasions only one was worn. For instance, Sītā when abducted by Rāvaṇa threw down her upper garment, the *Uttarīya*.[2] And she wore only one garment during her sojourn in the Aśokavana,[3] (*pītenaikena saṃvītām*). It appears that this single garment was worn in such a manner as to cover herself altogether, in all probability, like the saree as worn by the elderly Indian women, for Sītā is described as "*ekavastrāvaguṇṭhitām.*"[4] This reference is important in discussing the purdah-system of ancient India. Whether the women, when wearing a single garment, wore something over their breasts—as depicted in the paintings of Ajanta—is not clear from the data in the epic. The children seem to have worn only the lower garment for Mārīca describes Rāma at Viśvāmitra's hermitage as an archer wearing only one garment (ekavastradharo dhanvī)[5], and it is probable, as Dharma conjectures, that the *Uttarīya* was adopted only after the marriage ceremony.[6] A jacket called the *Kañcuka* seems to have been a dress peculiar to attendants and servants[7] for "one with a Kañcuka" i.e. *kañcukin* denotes in Sanskrit an attendant. Further, shoes or sandals (*pādukopānahat*) were worn;[8] it is possible that they were made of leather for, in fact, Arrian had observed that the ancient Indians wore shoes made of white leather and that these were elaborately trimmed while the soles were variegated.[9] But they were sometimes made of wood also as the Buddhist Vinaya indicates.[10]

§ 13. Silks of yellow colour appear to have been the most highly prized material at the time depicted in the Rāmāyaṇa; Sītā is described as *Pītakauśeyavāsinīm.*[11] Whether these silks were imported or produced locally is not clear from the data in the epics. The reference in the interpolated geographical cantos of the Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa to "*bhūmiñ ca kośakārāṇām*"[12] had been interpreted as referring to a land of worms yielding silk thread. This has been sometimes identified with China while some surmise it to be Assam.[13] The reference is not so reliable as to base any definite arguments for or against the importation of silks to India. On the other hand, the significance of the silk-industry of Kāśī, reflected in the ancient Indian literature,[14] indicates that they could have been produced locally. Silks seem to have been, however,

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1 Rhys Davids: *Buddhist India, p.*59.
2 NW V, 10, 46; IV, 4, 30.
3 NW V, 10, 23.
4 NW V, II, 24 (not BE & GE).
5 NW III, 41, 12.
6 Dharma: QJMS XXVIII p. 80.
7 NW VI, 95, 42.
8 NW II, 104, 75; II, 125, 20.
9 Bose: SREI II p. 200.
10 Oldenberg: Vinaya I p. 188.
11 NW III, 51, 11; II, 40, 9.
12 Cf. II § 53 ff.
13 Bose: SREI II p. 226 and fn.
14 Bose: *loc. cit.*, p. 225.

a less frequently used material than linens (*kṣauma*). Dharma has indubitably confused linens with silk when she states that "silk was not merely popular but also considered the most appropriate when worshipping" because all her references are to *kṣauma*.[1] Her observations, however, apply to linens which were worn by Kausalyā, Rāma, Bharata, Śatrughna and even Rāvaṇa.[2] Linens, also called *dukūla*, were among the presents given by Janakā to Sītā as her *Kanyādāna*.[3] Besides, woollen garments were frequently worn. The blankets (*kambala*) of wool appear to have been used as the *Uttarīya* in addition to its probable use in covering the body while sleeping.[4] Skins of the antelope (*ajina*) and of the *raṅku* deer were used more as sheets and coverlets than as garments. But a peculiar garment made of hair (*keśakambala*) is known as the garment of a Rākṣasī.

§ 14. Cotton might have been the material most worn by the commoners and as such it finds scanty reference in the epic while the maker of cotton articles was among the people who accompanied Bharata to call Rāma back to Ayodhyā.[5] Further, the knowledge of hemp clothing (*śaṇavastra*) is revealed in the description of cloths used to wrap the tail of Hanumat before setting fire to it.[6]

§ 15. Garments of various colours were worn specially by women.[7] Yellow was popular and in fact it appears to have been the favourite colour of Sītā.[8] Añjanā was wearing linen garments of yellow and red when she was encountered by Vāyu.[9] Rāvaṇa's mother dressed in white[10] while Rambhā was covering herself (cf. *Avaguṇṭhitā*) with a cloth, dark in hue like a rain cloud.[11] Red appears to have been the favourite colour of the Rākṣasas and Rāvaṇa was always dressed in red.[12] Dharma's comment that "the orange *kāṣāya* was the colour preferred by the Sanyāsins"[13] is not quite borne out by her references; on the other hand the Rāmāyaṇa shows that the attendants at the royal palace (*kañcukins*) were also attired in this colour[14] just as was a *parivrājaka*.[15]

§ 16. Whether the various colours had any religious or social significance is very doubtful. Actually Dharma's conjecture that "white colour seems to have been preferred for worship and penance, red colour on festive occasions and the black colour for sad occasions"[16] is anything but tenable when data of the Rāmāyaṇa are taken into consideration.

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1 Dharma: QJMS XXVIII p. 80.
2 NW II, 6, 28; II, 8, 7; II, 18, 5; II, 103, 2; BE VII, 108, 12; NW V, 45, 4.
3 NW I, 70, 3.
4 NW I, 12, 3; II, 94, 24; IV,41, 32.
5 NW II, 94, 21.
6 NW V, 56, 130.
7 NW IV, 24 27.
8 NW III, 3, 35; III, 51, 11; II, 40, 9.
9 NW IV, 57, 11.
10 NW V, 91, 14 (not BE & GE).
11 BE VII, 26, 18.
12 NW III, 54, 9; V, 17, 30.
13 Dharma: QJMS XXVIII p. 81.
14 NW II, 17, 3.
15 BE III, 46, 3 (not NW).
16 Dharma: *loc. cit.*

The only reference to a case of ascribing some significance to colours is in the dream of Trijaṭā wherein Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa were dressed in white while the heroes of the vanquished side were in yellow.[1] Socially important is the fact that the Caṇḍālas dressed themselves in blue and red (IV § 14).

§ 17. Besides clothes the ancient Indians wore various types of ornaments; everyone seems to have adorned himself or herself with some ornament.[2] Even the Caṇḍālas wore ornaments of iron (IV § 14). Gold, however, was the metal most used for ornaments;[3] and the place where Sītā struggled with Rāvaṇa was scattered with gold-dust (*kanakabindavaḥ*) from her ornaments.[4] Jewels, such as diamonds and cat's eyes (*vaiḍūrya*) and pearls, too, were used in making ornaments.[5] The polished ones seem to have formed the best quality of ornaments (*mṛṣṭābharaṇa*)[6]. It is interesting to observe that they were not a special feature of the attire of women alone; both men and women are represented in the epic as adorning themselves with various ornaments. Further, they were a sign of prosperity, and, hence are the people of Ayodhyā in the reign of Daśaratha described as follows: "there was none who had no ear-rings, coronets, or garlands....There was none who did not wear polished ornaments; nor was there also one who did not have necklaces (*niṣka*) and ornaments for the arm.[7]

§ 18. The characters of the epic are frequently represented as either possessing or disposing of a number of ornaments; an examination of the references to these reveals the variety of ornaments in vogue at the time depicted by the Rāmāyaṇa. Rāma possessed a celestial ring, with his name engraved on it,[8] and wore earrings (*kuṇḍala*;)[9] he also appears to have worn a necklace with a cat's eye as the central gem, which he took out of his neck and presented to Hanumat.[10] Lakṣmaṇa seems to have worn a bracelet (*keyūra*)[11] on his upper arm. And among the articles which Rāma and Sītā distributed before retiring to the forest were earrings, bracelets (*aṅgada and keyūra*), pearl necklaces and other necklaces with gold threads.[12] Rāvaṇa decked himself with a crown (*kirīṭa or mukuṭa*)[13], earrings of smelt gold which had the lustre of the morning sun,[14] bracelets (*aṅgada*)[15]. a waist-girdle of gold (*śroṇīsūtra*)[16] and a necklace.[17] Rāvaṇa also presented to Kumbhakarṇa garlands,

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1 NW V, 21, 12 and 24.
2 NW II, 41, 17; II, 81, 6; VI, 109, 21; IV, 16, 12.
3 NW III, 33, 8; II, 100, 16; VI, 95, 25; V, 5, 144; V, 45, 3.
4 BE III, 64, 39.
5 NW V, 45, 3; V, 5, 72; V, 5, 144; BE VI, 11, 29.
6 NW II, 37, 14; I, 6, 12.
7 NW I, 6, 11-12.
8 NW V, 31, 17.
9 NW VI, 109, 18.
10 BE VII, 40, 25.
11 NW II, 23, 43.
12 NW II, 35, 5 & 7.
13 NW VI, 78, 9; V, 17, 30.
14 NW III, 54, 7; V, 17, 32.
15 NW V, 17, 30.
16 NW V, 17, 31.
17 NW V, 45, 7.

bracelets (*aṇgada and keyūra*) of gold, earrings, rings, necklaces and a waist-girdle besides tying a gem on his head.[1] Atikāya wore golden bracelets and earrings,[2] while Akṣa had decked himself with gold necklaces (*niṣka*), bracelets (*aṅgada*) and earrings.[3] And likewise was Nikumbha wearing a necklace, bracelets, earrings and garlands.[4] The foregoing references are to the ornaments worn by men; women, too, wore similar ornaments and only a few items were decidedly peculiar to them.

§ 19. Sītā wore flowers[5] in addition to anklets,[6] bracelets, earrings and necklaces[7] (*hāra*)[8]. Kaikeyī adorned herself with a pearl necklace decked with precious jewels and all ornaments,[9] while Mantharā wore a waist girdle (*mekhalādāma*)[10]. The wives of Rāvaṇa and the women in his palace had as ornaments garlands,[11] gold *tilakas*,[12] earrings,[13] gold threads,[14] necklaces(*hāra*), bracelets (*keyūra* and *valaya*)[15], girdles(*rasanādāma*)[16], zones furnished with small bells and other ornaments (*kāñcī*) and anklets (*nūpura*)[17]. Rambhā, on the other hand, decked herself mostly with flowers though she too had a girdle (*mekhalādāma*)[18]. The slaves presented as Kanyādāna by Janaka wore gold necklaces (*niṣkakaṇṭhinām*)[19] while women are usually described as wearing necklaces (*hāra*), anklets, and bracelets (*keyūra and parihārya*)[20].

§ 20. From these references it becomes clear that necklaces, earrings and bracelets, worn on the upper arm (i.e. *keyūra* and *aṅgada*) were common to both sexes. Coronets and rings seem to have been worn only by men, at least as far as the Rāmāyaṇa data go. The waist-girdle, too, was a common ornament although it is clear that there were a number of types of it. What men wore is called merely a "*śroṇīsūtra*"—a thread, or it might have been only a chain as is used in some parts of India and Ceylon; (Cf. Sinhalese *havaḍiya*); three types of girdles were worn by women as their terms *mekhalādāma*, *rasanādāma* and *kāñcī* indicate. The zone girdle of women had been so important an item of personal ornamentation that it is not surprising to find many varieties of it; it is, however, not possible to distinguish between the first two; but the third, i.e. *kāñcī*, according to Monier Williams, is a zone furnished with small bells and other ornaments. In the Mahābhārata Hopkins has observed that *kāñcī* "does not occur.....(frequently as women's adornment

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1 NW VI, 44, 19-23.
2 NW VI. 52, 27-28.
3 NW V, 43, 12.
4 NW VI, 55, 5.
5 NW III, 69, 42.
6 NW II, 64, 18; BE III, 52. 29
7 BE IV, 6, 22.
8 BE III, 52, 33.
9 NW II, 12, 19.
10 NW II, 81, 7.
11 NW V, 5, 89.
12 NW V, 5, 74; V, 5, 69.
13 NW V, 5, 71.
14 NW V, 5, 73.
15 NW V, 5, 141; V, 6, 17.
16 NW V, 5, 70; V, 4, 55.
17 NW V, 13, 16, V, 2, 27; V, 4, 48.
18 BE VII, 26, 15-17.
19 NW I, 70, 6.
20 NW IV, 61, 32.

is described) till the time of the pseudo-epic."[1] There is, however, no doubt that the girdles described in the epic were similar to the one engraved on the figure of Sirimā Devatā in Bharhut.[2] Bracelets worn at the wrist, i.e. *valaya* and *apahārya* appear to be special to women just as the anklets which were worn only by them. Garlands of flowers were a common adornment though the women apparently used more flowers in decking themselves. A *tilaka* mark on the forehead was a peculiar ornament of the fair sex; it appears that not only mere unguents but also gold was used for it for Kaikeyī promised Mantharā that she would mark a beautiful *tilaka* of gold on her (*Mantharā's*) forehead.[3] Besides having an interesting significance in erotics, *tilaka* contributed to the beauty of a woman as it is said in the Rāmāyaṇa that the northern direction did not shine like a woman without the *tilaka*.[4] And it is worthwhile to observe, *en passant*, that Hopkins thinks that "perhaps the use of the *tilaka* sign may revert to the *tila* as holy."[5]

C. Toilette

§ 21. There is no doubt that the ancient Indians maintained a high standard of personal cleanliness. As the Rāmāyaṇa shows, bathing was important from a religious point of view too; and hence did Rāma bathe before beginning his fast prior to the consecration.[6] Rāma insisted that Sītā bathed and decked herself before appearing before him and as such she bathed not only the body but the head also (*śiraḥsnātā*)[7]. And Rāma, too, on this occasion had a bath wherein he cleaned or washed off his matted hair.[8]

§ 22. Among the richer folk bathing had been made almost an art and there were their attendants who specialized in the art of bathing and who were thus well-versed in its theory as well as practice (cf. *snāna-śikṣajñāḥ*); for instance, such expert bathers attended to Daśaratha's bath for which they prepared the water by mixing white sandalwood paste.[9] Besides sandalwood other herbs also appear to have been used in bathing for Hanumat told Rāma that he would be bathed by the Vānaras of Kiṣkindhā with various herbs; and equally interesting is his comment that they would bathe him with incantations as well.[10] While the latter practice is based on popular superstition or religion, the use of herbs in bathing has a medical significance and such baths are still advocated by the Āyurvedic physicians especially for convalescents. Another

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1 Hopkins: GEI p. 82.
2 Cf. Bharhut Tope: Plates LI and XXIII; see Rhys Davids: *Buddhist India:* Plate VII.
3 NW II, 12, 12.
4 NW III, 21, 8.
5 Hopkins: EM p. 12.
6 NW II, 8, 1.
7 NW VI, 95, 16 & 24.
8 NW VI, 109, 18.
9 BE II, 65, 8.
10 NW IV, 19, 7.

fact which is noteworthy as regards bathing in ancient India is that beautiful women were employed as masseurs and assistants at the bath and as such Vibhīṣaṇa tells Rāma that the latter would be bathed by noble women (*varastriyaḥ*)[1].

§ 23. After bathing, the body was besmeared with various kinds of perfumes (*vilepana*)[2] such as pastes (*kalka*) cosmetics or scented powder (*cūrṇa*) and lotions (*kaṣāya*)[3]. Sandalwood figures prominently among the perfumes used at the period reflected in the Rāmāyaṇa. Not only are two preparations of sandalwood viz. *Candanasāra*[4] and *Candanakalka*[5] mentioned, but it appears to have been widely used along with aloe wood to besmear the bodies of both men and women.[6] These with camphor (*karpūra*) were also burnt as incenses to perfume houses.[7] Lac paint (*lākṣārasa*) was used to paint the soles of the feet of women[8] while a reference in the BE reveals that the women painted designs on their bodies (cf. *patrarekhā*)[9]. They also applied collyrium on their eyes.[10]

§ 24. The Rāmāyaṇa gives very little data on the hair styles of the ancient Indians. The children's heads were probably shaven leaving a lock of hair on the top at the *Cūḍākaraṇa* ceremony and they generally tied it into a knot (*śikhā*)[11]. Besides, the children—especially of the Kṣatriya caste—had three or four side locks which were a sign of juvenility; these locks were called *kākapakṣa*[12] and were cut just before marriage at the Godāna ceremony.[13] It is not clear from the evidence of the epic whether the hair of adults was trimmed or shaven or allowed to grow. The fact that Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were able to get their hair matted when entering the forest probably indicates that they already had long hair. Besides, the epic refers to the barber as *smaśruvardhaka*[14] indicating that his concern was mainly the beard. Beards were either shaven or grown and the latter habit was probably commoner. If Ramaswami Sastri's interpretation of *Kūrca* as a comb for beards[15] is correct—which of course is somewhat doubtful because *kūrca* could in the particular context[16] mean a fan—those who grew beards tended them by using special combs for grooming them.

§ 25. The women, on the other hand, grew their hair long and they wore it most likely in plaits or knots. And periods of separation were marked by their wearing the hair in a single plait (*ekaveṇī*. V § 34). Normally flowers were used by women to deck their hair, which they

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1 NW VI, 102, 3.
2 NW VI, 8, 18; III, 1, 78.
3 NW II, 104, 73; GE I, 9, 17.
4 NW II, 23, 43; VI, 26, 34.
5 NW II, 104, 74.
6 NW II, 81, 7; V, 15, 9; VI, 8, 24; II, 65, 21; IV, 26, 8; BE VI, 11, 29
7 NW V, 4, 50 (not BE & GE).
8 NW II, 64, 16.
9 BE IV, 30, 55.
10 NW II, 104, 76.
11 NW III, 41, 12.
12 NW I, 17, 10; III, 41, 12.
13 Cf. NW I, 68, 23-29.
14 NW VI, 109, 16.
15 Ramaswami Sastri: SR p. 173.
16 NW II, 104, 76.

parted at the middle of the crown; this practice was undoubtedly common in ancient India although the Rāmāyaṇa does not make any clear mention of it. The reference given by P.C. Dharma is peculiar to the edition she used (i.e. V, 15, 24 of the edition of the Law Journal Press, Madras)[1].

§ 26. As articles used in toilette the epic mentions well-polished mirrors,[2] tooth-brushes (*dantadhāvana*)[3] and combs (*kaṅkata*)[4]. These are mentioned among the articles miraculously obtained by Bharadvāja to treat Bharata and his party; the account of their jubilation in his hermitage is based no doubt on the luxurious living of the wealthy classes. As such it is interesting to note that these classes employed women—no less than five—to massage the body.[5]

§ 27. As evident from the foregoing account the data on this subject are very scanty. Very little, in fact, of an individual's routine in toilette is gleanable from the epic other than in occasional hints, such as those on the practices of washing one's self in the morning[6] and getting one's feet washed before retiring to bed.[7]

D. Furniture and Utensils

§ 28. The Rāmāyaṇa, as already stated (V § I), gives us but a very faint idea as regards the daily life of the ancient Indians. It sought to narrate a lofty story of a magnanimous person and as such was less interested in depicting with any degree of realism, the life of the common man. It is, therefore, not surprising that there are only very few references to furniture and household utensils used at the time reflected by the epic.

§ 29. Seats and beds are the only furniture mentioned.[8] A couch of gold with a foot-stool (*paryaṅkaṃ sarvakāñcanaṃ sapādapīṭham*)[9] was in the palace of Ayodhyā while the one of Rāvaṇa was covered with a valuable rug or cushion.[10] The BE also refers to a golden seat (*sauvarṇam āsanam*) of Kaikeyī[11] and seats of ivory and gold with cat's eyes, covered with precious rugs or cushions, in the palace of Rāvaṇa.[12] Besides couches and seats, cushions, probably embroidered with gold, were used in the court of Rāma and the ascetics who visited him sat on them.[13] Beds formed an important item in the household of the wealthy classes because sleeping on the ground appears to have been something unimaginable for them; for instance Lakṣmaṇa in utter bewilderment

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1 Dharma: QJMS XXVIII p. 74.
2 NW II, 104, 75.
3 NW II, 104, 74.
4 NW II, 104, 76.
5 NW II, 104, 55.
6 NW II, 60, 4.
7 NW II, 99, 23, II, 48, 13; II, 51, 27.
8 NW II, 104, 76.
9 NW II, 35, 8; II, 19, 61.
10 BE VII, 13, 16.
11 BE: II, 72. 2.
12 BE V, 10, 2.
13 BE VII, 60, 12.

asks, "How can Rāma aḷong with Sītā sleep on the ground?"[1] Both Rāma and Rāvaṇa are referred to as sleeping cn beds and that of Rāma is said to have been covered with a white bed-spread.[2] And Sugrīva was seated on a golden bed with a valuable bed-spread.[3] The skin of the *Raṅku* deer seems to have been used as a rug or a bed-spread.[4] It is likely that the variegated *kuthā* was used not only as housings of elephants but also as floor-rugs.[5] A curious article in the palace of Rāvaṇa was the mechanical bird, which made noises (*nāditāṃ yantra-vihagaiḥ*)[6].

§ 30. Houses were lit with numerous lamps which consumed oils[7] and in the richer homes the oil was scented[8]. For eating and drinking gold and silver bowls, gold pitchers, and crystal vessels were used in the palaces of Daśaratha and Rāvaṇa[9]. Pots were used for cooking; but the twofold preparations of meat show that not only pots but also spits were employed in cooking. (V § 7)

E. Customs and Etiquette

§ 31. In ancient India the social order which sought to establish not only the position of the individual in society but also a norm governing the mutual associations of individuals, had laid down in the dim and distant past a series of social conventions which by the time reflected in the Rāmāyaṇa appear to have become deep-rooted among the people. Due to the fact that ancient Indian society had as its fundamental basis the religious dogmas of the time, many of those conventions assumed the character of specifically religious precepts and ceremonies. Accordingly, the division between social customs and religious ceremonies gave rise to a practical difficulty in so far as their distinguishing features were extremely flimsy. For instance, the naming ceremony[10] and even the warming of a new house[11] had become associated with religion. This gives rise to many difficulties in detailing coherently the customs of the ancient Indians although the Rāmāyaṇa contains many references to them. Putting them under the headings of beliefs and ritual very few in fact remain to be termed as secular customs, and they cannot but be stated in a somewhat incoherent manner.

§ 32. Welcoming a visitor was not merely a matter of etiquette; the custom necessitated certain ceremonies as well in connection with the event. Usually fried paddy (*lāja*)[12] was scattered in addition to per-

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1 NW II, 52, 8.
2 NW V, 5, 104; BE VII, 37, 11.
3 NW IV, 26, 26.
4 NW II, 35, 8.
5 NW V, 5, 47, & 57.
6 NW V, 5, 48.
7 NW VI, 109, 62.
8 NW V, 4, 51, V, 13, 18.
9 NW V, 6, 25; GE I, 13, 18; NW V, 4, 46-47.
10 BE I, 18, 21 & 24, VII, 66, 9.
11 NW II, 60, 23-30.
12 NW II, 46, 13.

forming other rites (*maṅgalāni*)[1]. And similar rites seem to have been performed when a person left on a journey.[2] Returning to a place after a long absence, too, was marked by certain customary practices as can be implied from a statement of Kausalyā; she in despair asked, "When will they (i.e. Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā) do *pradakṣiṇā* to flowers, maids, Brahmans and fruit?"[3] As her question really means, "When will they return to the city?" it can be inferred that they had to do the above as a rite when they returned.

§ 33. An interesting custom relating to the settlement of alliances is described in connection with the meeting of Rāma and Sugrīva. They ensured their alliance by holding each other's hands and embracing each other in the presence of fire.[4] The presence of the fire may have had a religious significance, as inferable from Vedic practice.

§ 34. Lovers in separation seem to have been obliged to adhere to certain practices. The women wore a single plait of hair and besides being thoughtful dressed themselves in soiled garments, refrained from bathing, and fasted.[5] Sītā while in Laṅkā had plaited her hair into a single braid and slept on the ground.[6] And Rāma abstained from meat and liquor.[7] (V § 6)

§ 35. It appears that a person could be insulted by resorting to certain means; for instance Śatrughna expressed his contempt towards Mantharā by abusing her and throwing dust on her face.[8] Kicking, too, indicated contempt, for Vibhīṣaṇa says that even a kick from Rāvaṇa is no insult to him.[9] As Hopkins observes, grasping by the hair was insulting and that may be also a reason why Vedavatī, whose hair Rāvaṇa held, resolved to commit suicide.[10]

§ 36. The expression "*ā keśagrahaṇāt*" in the statement of Mārīca to Rāvaṇa is explained by Hopkins as signifying proverbially "as hard as I can; to the last."[11] Though the first interpretation is doubtful the latter is possible because *keśagrahaṇa* can metaphorically refer to death.[12] It, however, seems far-fetched to explain this expression ás "upto the time (I am) insulted or despised" in spite of the fact that grasping by the hair was a form of insult. As in the case of Vedavatī an offended person often sought to commit suicide according to the practice of *prāya*[13] which was current at the time. *Prāya* also included a form of *Satyagraha*, wherein one attempted to win over another by

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1 NW III, 4, 11.
2 NW II, 1, 33.
3 BE II, 43, 15;=NW II, 46, 15, whose text is very corrupt.
4 NW IV, 4, 13; V, 56, 119.
5 NW V, 15, 8. Cf. Meghadūta: the wife of the Yakṣa II, 32.
6 NW V, 22, 16; V, 64, 13; V, 22, 12.
7 NW V, 33, 5.
8 NW II, 81, 11 (not BE)
9 NW V, 90, 12.
10 BE VII, 17, 28-29.
11 Hopkins: Pro. Amr. Phil. Soc. XLIX (1910) p 34. fn.
12 Cf. Kale: Hitopadeśa, p. l. verse 3.
13 Hopkins: JAOS XXI pp. 150 ff.

resorting to a threat of suicide or of abandoning comforts of life; for instance Bharata, in a final effort to convince Rāma that he should return to Ayodhyā, ordered Sumantra in the following words: "Spread here for me on the ground some Kuśa grass; I shall seek to die (*pratyupaveksyāmi*) until the elder brother favours me. Like a starving Brahman with neither support nor wealth I shall lie again on the bed until he does not go to the forest."[1] However, Rāma prevented him from resorting to it by showing him that it was a special practice of the Brahmans and that the Kṣatriyas had no right to do it.[2]

§ 37. Also important are the practices of swearing and cursing; in ancient India these were not merely based on sudden outbursts of temper but had as their substratum a series of beliefs on the efficacy of the word etc; as such we shall deal with these subjects among the popular beliefs (VII §§ 41 ff).

§ 38. There is no doubt, whatsoever, that the Indian reflected in the Rāmāyaṇa was essentially cultured; not only did he maintain a fairly advanced material civilization but also had organized his life in society in a remarkable manner. As stated earlier, he had established for himself many social conventions of which the customs were already outlined in the foregoing paragraphs. Equally or even more important for the maintenance of order in society than the customs, was his code of etiquette.

§ 39. To deal first with the etiquette involved in receiving a visitor and in meeting someone, we observe that the practice of going forward to meet the visitor (*pratyudgamana*) was current at the time reflected in the epic. The distance one had to go for this purpose seems to have depended on the length of time between the notice of the visitor's arrival and his coming; Rāma, according to the Uttarakāṇḍa, went no less than a *Kroṣa* (about 2 miles) to receive Gārgya.[3] Lomapāda walked upto Ṛṣyaśṛṅga with Brahmans and ministers[4] while Daśaratha went forward with relations and teachers,[5] and also according to the BE with priests, to receive Viśvāmitra.[6] Rāma hurried down from his room to meet Vasiṣṭha and assist him to alight from the chariot.[7] Sītā received Rāma as he entered the house by going up to him and bowing down,[8] and according to the seventh kāṇḍa Arjuna went forward placing his clasped hands on the head to receive Pulastya.[9]

§ 40. On meeting a Brahman or an ascetic, he was worshipped with clasped hands and circumambulated. Viśvāmitra was received by Daśaratha in that manner[10] while he was propitiated by Janaka with

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1 NW II, 124, 13-14.
2 NW II, 124, 15-16.
3 BE VII, 100, 5.
4 NW I. 12, 26.
5 NW I, 16, 14.
6 BE I, 18, 42.
7 NW II, 7, 7.
8 NW II, 29, 9.
9 BE VII, 33, 6.
10 NW I, 16, 16.

acts prescribed in treatises.[1] Rāma usually worshipped by holding the feet and circumambulated the various Brahmans and ascetics he met in the course of his travelling.[2] Rāma and Sītā respect Suyajña by standing up and worshipping him,[3] while Sagara with his two wives circumambulated Bhṛgu.[4] But when Vasiṣṭha met Viśvāmitra, the former received him with the statement "*svāgataṃ tava.*"[5] This may be because they were equals. On the other hand, when Vasiṣṭha worshipped Bharadvāja the latter only got up from his seat and ordered the pupils to treat the guest.[6] A similar reciprocation of salutation by an ascetic is recorded in NW VI, 81, 66, where Kālanemi greets Hanumat who worshipped him with "*svāgatam*". When meeting parents and other elders after a period of absence, they were worshipped by falling prostrate at their feet with clasped hands.[7]

§ 41. Welcoming a visitor or a relation was in accordance with the honour and the affection in which he was held. Bharata, being the younger brother, paid Rāma obeisance with a fitting reception (*svāgatena yathārhena*)[8], while Guha, who was more a friend and ally than a vassal of Rāma embraced him saying "*svāgataṃ te*".[9] And the citizens greeted Rāma when he returned by clasping their hands in salutation and saying "*svāgataṃ te*",[10] which appears to have been the standard expression of cordial welcome.[11] On the other hand, Sugrīva fell at the feet of Rāma touching them with his head through affection and respect; Rāma reciprocated it by raising him up and embracing him.[12] Vibhīṣaṇa was received by Rāma in an identical manner.[13] Therefore it may be considered the customary manner in which a friend of a lower status was received. Among friends of equal status greater cordiality seems to have existed, for Bharata welcomed Sugrīva to the palace by holding his hands(*pāṇau gṛhītvā*)[14].

§ 42. When a person was received by a sage or an ascetic the normal course of etiquette, as shown above, (V § 40) was that the sage or the ascetic was respected and worshipped; the Rāmāyaṇa, however, records two instances (one of which is a clear interpolation) where the usual practice had been reversed. The NW in an exclusive passage describes the descent of Nārada to the battle-field in Laṅkā where he, though a sage, circumambulated Rāma and reminded him of his former birth as Viṣṇu.[15] Here the concept that Rāma was an incarnation of

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1 NW I, 62, 2.
2 NW III, 6, 21; III, 9, 10 & 17; BE III, 12, 24; VII, 91, 5.
3 NW II, 35, 4.
4 NW I, 35, 15.
5 NW I, 48, 2.
6 NW II, 103, 7.
7 NW II, 78, 2; VI, 108, 42; V, 55, 26; GE II, 82, 18.
8 NW VI, 108, 32.
9 NW II, 51, 12 & 15.
10 NW VI, 108, 46.
11 NW I, 70, 26; BE VII, 49, 7; VII, 49, 15.
12 BE IV, 38, 18-19.
13 NW V, 93, 20-21.
14 NW VI, 109, 61.
15 NW VI, 27, 15 & 17 ff. (not BE & GE).

Viṣṇu is responsible for placing Rāma on a higher pedestal than Nārada. But the other instance is more problematic: Śabarī who was a female ascetic saluted Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa by clasping their feet.[1] It is, at the very outset, to be pointed out that this particular departure from the normal practice was not because Śabarī was a woman. In fact Ahalyā who too was a woman was saluted by Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa by holding her feet.[2] The only feasible explanation which could be given is that Śabarī, as her name itself suggests, was of a non-Aryan aboriginal stock, which the Aryans did not hold in high esteem. However, it is interesting to note that the Rāmāyaṇa depicts at least one instance where ethnic differences were more important than religious considerations.

§ 43. Besides the traditional statement "*svāgataṃ te*", other words of benediction were also in vogue, for instance Kāla who came to Rāma in the guise of an ascetic greeted him with "may you prosper" (*vardhayasva*) and "may you through the royal duties attain victory in both worlds" (*jayasva rājadharmeṇa ubhau lokau*)[3]. Kausalyā, likewise, received Bharata with the wish, "may you attain longevity" (*dīrgham āyur avāpnuhi*)[4]. The ministers of Rāma greeted him with "may you prosper"[5] while those of Rāvaṇa bow to him and stand with their hands clasped in salutation.[6]

§ 44. The visitors were expected to announce themselves to their hosts; although its original purpose would have been to let the host know who his visitors were, the Rāmāyaṇa reflects the time when it had become merely an act of courtesy: while we can understand the reason why the characters of the Rāmāyaṇa introduced themselves to strangers they met,[7] we are perplexed as to the necessity for Rāma to announce his name in saluting his own father.[8] It clearly shows that this practice had become something just mechanical. Or else the rules of etiquette were a strong force just as they were later at the time of the Dharmaśāstras. The Manusmṛti, for instance, lays down identical types of salutation to elders as does the Rāmāyaṇa and therein is given the specific rule that the name should be announced in paying homage to an elder.[9] Thus it is clear that the loss of the utilitarian function of an announcement is to be dated as far back as the Rāmāyaṇa. In case one did not introduce one's self, the other seems to have had the right of enquiring and this appears to have been done very politely as Maya asked Rāvaṇa, "Dear one, how may I now know who your honour is."[10]

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1 NW III, 80, 9.
2 NW I, 45, 17.
3 BE VII, 103, 7 & 4.
4 NW II, 83, 28.
5 BE VII, 74, 3.
6 NW VI, 7, 4; VI, 35, 19; VI, 7, 36.
7 NW II, 58, 14; III, 1. 50; IV, 42, 2; BE VII, 88, 16.
8 NW II, 5, 18.
9 Manusmṛti: II, 122. Cf. Kullūkabhaṭṭa's Commy.
10 BE VII, 12, 14.

§ 45. The host, then, offered a seat to the visitor; this was done merely by pointing out to a seat with or without the request to sit.[1] The conversation, which ensued, comprised firstly polite inquiries about health (*kuśalānāmaya*)[2]. The Dharmaśāstras state that the Brahmans should be inquired as to their *kuśala* and the Kṣatriyas as to their *anāmaya*:[3] but the Rāmāyaṇa does not show that such a distinction was in existence at the time reflected by it although there is a single reference to Ambarīṣa inquiring after Ṛcīka's *kuśala*.[4] Another reference to Sumati asking Viśvāmitra about his *kuśala* loses its significance because it is clearly stated that they inquired after the *kuśala* of each other.[5] Besides, inquiries concerning other factors of an individual's life were made. For instance Vasiṣṭha asked Bharadvāja about his fire-tending, pupils, beasts and birds,[6] while Bharadvāja questioned Bharata about his kingdom, treasury and city.[7] Viśvāmitra inquired after the progress of the sacrifice of Janaka[8] just as Pulastya asked about the virtues, fires and sons of Arjuna.[9] And Rāma, according to the GE, is praised by his subjects as being of the habit of inquiring after their fire-tending, wives, pupils, and servants.[10] Further, the host praised the guest and expressed the joy in meeting him.[11] After that only was any question about the purpose of the visit asked.[12]

§ 46. The visitors were treated most cordially in ancient India. In fact hospitality to guests has been proverbial. It has been raised to the rank of a religious obligation and its neglect was deemed as punishable in both this and the next worlds. Kaṭhopaniṣad[13] outlines the evil effects of neglecting a guest as follows: "Hope, expectation, meeting (with the good), friendly words, sacrifices, pious gifts, sons and cattle—all this loses the man of little sense in whose house a Brahman dwells without taking food." The Rāmāyaṇa, too, echoes the same sentiments in stating, "The guest leaves behind his sins and takes away the merits of him who does not treat to the best of his ability a guest who comes to his house."[14] A similar concept seems to be behind the statement, "He, who eats without paying respect to (i e. treating) an ascetic who had come to his place, will eat in the next birth his own flesh."[15] Further, it states emphatically that a guest, though of ordinary status, deserves respect from the wise one who wishes to know the *dharma*.[16] Besides, hospitality to guests was a special duty of the Vānaprasthas (III § 28). As in theory, it

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1 NW II, 6, 10; II, 5, 20; V, 76, 11; VI, 35, 18.
2 NW I, 16, 17; III, 1, 51; III, 3, 10; III, 19, 4; VI, 108, 39; BE VII, 1, 16.
3 Manusmṛti: II, 127. Cf. Kullūkabhaṭṭa's Commy.
4 NW I, 57, 13.
5 NW I, 44, 1.
6 NW II, 103, 11.
7 NW II, 103, 10.
8 NW I, 46, 8.
9 BE VII, 33, 13.
10 GE II, 1, 38.
11 NW I, 46, 11-15; II, 7, 8; BE VII, 33, 9-12.
12 NW I, 16, 22-35.
13 Kaṭhopaniṣad I, 8.
14 NW III, 16, 27.
15 NW III, 16, 26.
16 NW IV, 61, 125.

was practised, as the Rāmāyaṇa data reveals, with utmost care. Numerous references are found to cases of extending hospitality to guests and visitors. In analysing the ways in which the visitors, especially to hermitages, were treated, it appears that the fundamental requirements to be supplied were a seat, water to wash the feet (*pādyam*) and articles to be used in worship (*arghyam*)[1]. Besides these were offered food, which normally consisted of fruit, roots and yams.[2] The visitors to royal palaces were treated with further gifts, especially if the guest was a Brahman. Daśaratha and Rāma gave the sages who visited them a cow as well,[3] while Arjuna added to these a further gift of *madhuparka*.[4] The last reference, however, occurs in the latest section of the epic.

§ 47. We shall now examine the etiquette involved in taking leave and bidding farewell. Courtesy necessitated that friends were informed of an intended departure.[5] In taking leave of a person of the family due regard had to be paid to his position. So the elders were worshipped by touching their feet with the head and circumambulation while the equals embraced one another.[6] Thus Bharata worshipped Rāma but embraced Lakṣmaṇa before going to Kekaya.[7] In the case of Brahmans and sages it appears that they had to be circumambulated,[8] and that the reason for leaving was also sometimes given: for instance, Janaka tells Viśvāmitra in a statement, which reminds one of the regular formula in Buddhist texts,[9] "Greatest of sages, it is time for my work and the sun is setting."[10] Garuda took leave of Rāma by circumambulating and embracing him.[11] Those of lower ranks followed the usual practice of worshipping the feet and circumambulating.[12] It was considered polite to tell the host of one's departure; and hence the members of the assembly at Daśaratha's palace went home only after talking to the king (*narendram āmantrya*)[13].

§ 48. Bidding farewell was also associated with similar practices. "*Svasti te'stu*" seems to have been the usual benediction on such occasions;[14] although variants such as "*nityaṃ śivaṃ te'stu*" were also current.[15] This benediction which appears to have been known as the "*svastyayana*", might have consisted of invocations to gods and other forces; for example, the queens of Daśaratha blessed Śāntā at the moment of her departure, "May Vāyu, Agni, the sun, the earth, the moon and the directions protect you, who are faithful to your

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1 NW I, 45, 18; II, 104, 2; III, 51, 32; BE VII, 65, 6; VII, 71, 4.
2 NW I, 8, 51-52; II. 58, 18-19.
3 NW I, 16, 21; BE VII, 1, 13.
4 BE VII, 33, 8-9.
5 NW II, 34, 23.
6 NW II, 5, 35; II, 6, 43; II, 28, 43; BE VII, 48, 20; VII, 64, 15-17.
7 NW II, 1, 31.
8 NW I, 61, 28; BE VII, 56, 11.
9 Dīgha Nikāya (P.T.S.) I p.85.
10 NW I, 61, 27.
11 NW VI, 28, 33.
12 NW V, 37, 20-21; V, 53, 22; VI, 103, 18; V, 62, 1; II, 50, 22.
13 NW II, 5, 36.
14 NW VI, 81, 49; BE VII, 82, 19.
15 NW V, 37, 26.

husband, in the forest."[1] The "svastyayana" seems to have included certain rites, which we shall deal with later in the relevant Chapter.

§ 49. A few cases of bidding farewell under circumstances different from the usual are also referred to in the Rāmāyaṇa. Sītā circumambulated Rāma before entering the pyre.[2] Tārā embraced Vālin and circumambulated him before sending him to battle.[3] Lakṣmaṇa before going to battle worshipped Rāma[4] just as Atikāya worshipped his parents.[5] So did the sons of Rāvaṇa take leave of their father while Kumbhakarṇa embraced and circumambulated Rāvaṇa and bowed to him before he set out to fight.[6]

§ 50. Just as the host walked forward to meet the guest in welcoming him (V § 39), in bidding farewell the host walked for some distance with the guest as a mark of courtesy. This practice called in the epic as "*anuyātrā*"[7] has been prevalent in India and other eastern countries from time immemorial. In the Rāmāyaṇa, Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and the citizens followed Bharata for some distance at his leaving for Kekaya,[8] and Daśaratha went with Ṛṣyaśṛṅga till the latter asked him to stay back.[9] Even then Daśaratha stood there till Ṛṣyaśṛṅga could not be seen.[10] An interesting rule as regards this practice was that one should not go very far with a person if one wishes him to return, (*yam icchec ca punar draṣṭuṃ na taṃ dūram anuvrajet*)[11]. Further, the wife followed the husband upto the door and saw him off there.[12] Besides the practice of following a guest for some distance, some guests were accompanied by the host or a representative of him as is implied in Rāma's statement to Janaka, "May you, O king, go back to your city, taking with you the gems. And Bharata will come after you for the sake of company (*sahāyārtham*)".[13]

§ 51. The elders in a family were always respected. They were worshipped and the usual manner of worship was to touch their feet with one's head.[14] Even the wife salutes the husband by placing her clasped hands on her head (*Śirasy añjalim ādhāya*)[15]. Brahmans and sages were similarly saluted.[16] In an exclusive verse of the BE Rāma asks Bharata if he respects gods, ancestors, attendants (*bhṛtyān*?), teachers, elders, physicians and Brahmans.[17] And the highest form of respect seems

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1 NW I, 12, 13-14.
2 NW VI, 97, 23.
3 NW IV, 12, 9.
4 NW VI, 63, 26.
5 NW VI, 35, 20.
6 NW VI, 49, 3; VI, 44, 26.
7 NW II, 39, 2-5.
8 NW II, 1, 30-33.
9 NW I, 12, 10.
10 NW I, 12, 23.
11 NW II, 43, 52.
12 NW II, 17, 19.
13 BE VII, 38, 5.
14 NW II, 19, 2-3 & 75; II, 34, 5; II, 67, 8; II, 43, 2-3; VI, 40, 7; VI, 108, 41.
15 NW II, 67, 8.
16 NW II, 59, 1; II, 85, 1; II, 105, 17f; BE VII, 49, 2.
17 BE II, 100, 13.

to be what accompanies the humblest act such as touching the other's feet with one's head and hence did Daśaratha seek to propitiate Kaikeyī by resorting to it.[1]

§ 52. A few other acts of courtesy are also recorded in the Rāmāyaṇa. Sumantra always went behind Rāma with his hands clasped in salutation.[2] Bharata, when entering the hermitages of Bharadvāja and of Rāma, left his army far behind and entered the premises with only the ministers.[3] An interesting case, especially when reviewed with reference to the usual position held by women in ancient India, is the order in which Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā entered the ship. Rāma asked Lakṣmaṇa to get in first and help Sītā in and Rāma got in last.[4] After committing an offence it was usual to beg for pardon as Dadhimukha did by clasping his hands in salutation to Aṅgada and pleading that the fault was committed through foolishness.[5]

§ 53. Elders and sages were saluted before being accosted and while talking to them the usual practice was to keep the hands clasped in salutation.[6] So were superiors addressed.[7] A superior could talk to others in any way he liked; so we find that Rāma talked to Sumantra, before dismissing him, with his right hand touching the right of the other[8] (*spṛśan kareṇa dharmajño dakṣiṇam dakṣiṇena tam*). This is virtually the hand-shake as prevalent in the western society of today. Rāma, again, talked to Pratardana after embracing him.[9] A command was accepted by bowing down or placing the clasped hands on the head.[10]

§ 54. There is very little doubt that the ancient Indians were very polite in conversation. The numerous polite expressions recorded in the Buddhist texts and later in the dramas attest this fact abundantly. In the epic too a few of them are found; for instance, a request was preceded by the expression, "*Bhavatō'numate*,"[11] which, it is interesting to note, is almost identical with the French "s'il vous plait". In addressing, such terms as "*deva*", "*āryaputra*"[12] and even "*putra*"[13] were used in addition to proper names. The metrical requirements of the epic might have been responsible for such artificial forms like *Lakṣmaṇāgraja*, *Kaikeyī-mātar* etc., which were quite probably not in vogue. Benedictions were often exchanged and the commonest was to wish for longevity.[14]

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1 NW II, 13, 54-55.
2 NW II, 5, 16.
3 NW II, 103, 1-2; II, 104, 5-9; II, 106, 26.
4 NW II, 56, 10-11.
5 NW V, 62, 9.
6 NW II, 2, 1; III, 1, 51; VI, 35, 24; VI, 22, 41; II, 58, 12 & 24; BE VII, 35, 1.
7 NW II, 43, 16; I, 1, 78; V, 27, 1; VI, 95, 1; III, 40, 1; VI, 8, 38; V, 60, 26; IV, 44, 1.
8 NW II, 53, 10.
9 BE VII, 38, 15.
10 NW II, 17, 12; VI, 29, 18; BE VII, 44, 3.
11 NW II, 2, 2 & 6.
12 NW II, 17, 11; II, 32, 2; II, 33, 11.
13 GE III, 19, 2.
14 NW IV, 59, 1; II, 6, 37; VI, 100, 30-32.

Regards were exchanged also through messengers and, as often described in Buddhist texts,[1] the fact of worshipping a person could be conveyed through a message.[2] Besides, the messages usually began with inquiries about the recipient's health.[3]

§ 55. Polite usage required that gratitude is expressed in some form or other. In the Rāmāyaṇa we find that the bearers of good news were rewarded with gold, cows and gems.[4] Manthará was not only emancipated from slavery but also presented with ornaments by grateful Kaikeyī.[5] Daśaratha as a token of gratitude allowed Kaikeyī to ask for two boons,[6] while Rāma presented Hanumat with a necklace.[7] On occasions of special significance, like a coronation ceremony, presents were exchanged among friendly kings[8] and one was congratulated on one's achievements.[9]

§ 56. The etiquette associated with dining seems to have been simple and the epic offers very little data on it. It was usual to eat in company and eating alone is regarded as something base,[10] although P.C. Dharma's interpretation that it was "considered one of the greatest sins" seem- to be farfetched.[11] Further, the women ate only after the males had taken their meals.[12]

§ 57. As important as worshipping and bowing down in paying homage has been the practice of circumambulating. In the foregoing discussion many instances, where it was resorted to, have already been recorded. "*Pradakṣiṇā*" as it is called was performed by walking gracefully round the person respected, in a clock-wise direction so that the right half of the body was always towards the person circumambulated. Not only were persons respected in that manner,[13] but also sacred objects whether they had a religious or a social significance. For instance, Rāma circumambulated the articles brought for his consecration.[14] And Bharata did likewise to Rāma's sandals[15] and to Citrakūṭa, where Rāma resided.[16]

§ 58. Finally we shall examine the data of the Rāmāyaṇa on the subject of embracing and kissing, which, too, were among the forms of greetings current in ancient India. Embracing, in addition to being an act of courtesy among relatives and friends,[17] was also an expression of

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1 Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā: Cakkhupāla Vatthu.
2 NW II, 53, 35; II, 62, 17 & 37.
3 NW I, 69, 4-5; II, 62, 16.
4 NW II, 5 34.
5 NW II, 81, 20; II, 9, 29; II, 12, 1.
6 NW II, 11, 15.
7 BE VII, 40, 25.
8 NW VI, 109, 83-84; 89-101.
9 BE VII, 38, 27.
10 NW II, 83, 24.
11 Dharma: QJMS XXVIII p. 14.
12 NW II, 60, 31; II, 109, 38 & 39.
13 NW II, 19, 78; II, 43, 1 & 2 & 15; II, 105, 18; II, 126, 19.
14 NW II, 19, 77.
15 NW II, 125, 22.
16 NW II, 126, 3.
17 Cf. NW II, 5, 19; VI, 100, 13; II, 6, 9; VI, 49, 1; II, 28, 18 & 38; VI, 10, 18.

joy. Rāma and his brothers embraced one another at moments of joy[1] and so did Kausalyā embrace Sītā for speaking cleverly.[2] In fact Rāma told Lakṣmaṇa "I am pleased; this great act has been done by you quickly. My satisfaction on its account is rendered by me to (this) embrace."[3] Friends, too, embraced one another at times of victory and happiness.[4] Kissing which was prevalent in ancient India seems to have been confined to a type of sniff-kiss on the head. In fact, the literal rendering of the Sanskrit expression for kissing i.e. *mūrdhny upāghrāya* etc., is "smelling on the head". This was resorted to both as a mark of affection and as an expression of joy; and it was current usually among the relatives and the members of a family. Parents and grand-parents are represented in the epic as kissing their children and grand-children.[5] Besides, sages such as Viśvāmitra and Agastya are said to have kissed Rāma,[6] while Vālmīki is stated to have kissed Śatrughna in the Uttara-kāṇḍa.[7] And Anasūyā kissed Sītā.[8] Isolated cases of Rāma kissing his brother Bharata[9] and his friend Guha[10] are also recorded in the epic.

§ 59. It is interesting to note that married couples embraced each other under certain circumstances even in public. They, too, resorted to embracing as a mark of joy as Sītā did to greet Rāma after he killed Khara and his army.[11] It was not regarded as outrageous to embrace one's wife before others. Rāma embraced, before his brothers, Sītā, who was crying at the news of Daśaratha's death,[12] while Rāvaṇa embraced Mandodarī in the sabhā.[13] And Sugrīva was hugging his wife, Tārā, when he was seen by Lakṣmaṇa.[14] Yet kissing is not mentioned as a form of greeting between husbands and wives.

§ 60. Lastly, the dead bodies of dear ones were embraced; thus Sītā embraced the body of Jaṭāyu and lamented[15] and the Rakṣasīs of Rāvaṇa's *antaḥpura* did likewise to the body of Rāvaṇa.[16]

§ 61. The foregoing account of the customs and etiquette of ancient India prove beyond doubt that the Indians had been a polite race from a time far beyond that reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa. It is of special importance to note that the code of etiquette represented in the epic is identical with that depicted in the Buddhist Canon and later works.[17] Even the Mahābhārata, which reflects a society of rough people with

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1 NW VI, 81, 182; VI, 108, 36; VI, 70, 9; BE VII, 83, 2.
2 NW II, 42, 21.
3 NW III, 20, 26.
4 NW VI, 90, 36; VI, 93, 6; VI, 28, 18; VI, 32, 5; III, 47, 4; VI, 81, 186.
5 NW I, 72, 4; II, 78, 3; VI, 22,42 & 43; VI, 109, 55; II, 76, 17; etc.
6 NW I, 24, 23; GE III, 18, 28.
7 BE VII, 71, 12.
8 NW III, 1, 73; III, 3, 23,
9 NW II, 114, 1.
10 NW II, 51, 18.
11 NW III, 35, 52.
12 NW II, 116, 25.
13 NW VI, 35, 17; VI, 36, 16.
14 NW IV, 26, 41.
15 NW III, 57, 24.
16 NW VI, 91, 8.
17 Cf. references to Buddhist Literature in the foregoing paragraphs & Mehta: PBI.

very little consideration for conventions, reveals, though faintly, the adherence to a similar system of etiquette. It is, therefore, not surprising that the majority of them survives even today in every part of India despite foreign influences.

F. Festivities and Recreations

§ 62. Festivities are a feature common to all cultures at all times. In ancient India, too, many days were declared festive either on religious or on astronomical grounds. The Jātakas mention a number of such festivals;[1] while the Jain Canon, too, refers to some of them.[2] The Rāmāyaṇa, also reveals the existence of numerous festivals (*utsava*), during which the streets of Ayodhyā were crowded with people and dancers.[3] The most important of the festivities, mentioned in the epic, is the *Indradhvaja* festival.[4] It should be noted that the Rāmāyaṇa does not describe this festival with any detail; on the other hand a particular incident in the course of its celebration, to wit, the lowering or the dropping of the banner of Indra, is cited as a simile in describing the death of a warrior or the fainting of a person. Thus Dūśaṇa fell in battle, like the banner of Śakra (*śakradhvaja*)[5]; Vālin's death was like the dropping of the banner of Indra;[6] and Bharata at the news of his father's death fainted and fell on the ground like the banner of Indra at the conclusion of the festival (*śacīpateḥ ketur ivotsavakṣaye*)[7].

§ 63. The only special information given by the BE is that the banner was raised on the full-moon of the month of Aśvin (*paurṇamāyām mahītale aśvayuksamaye māsi*)[8], that is, at the time of the vernal equinox. The importance of this data is based on the fact that the ancient Indian records are not unanimous as to the date of celebration. For instance the Jain texts give as the date, the full-moon day of both Aṣāḍha and Śrāvaṇa, the latter being the date in Lāḍa.[9] The Buddhist Canon seems to place it in the first month of the summer season (*Cf. Yathindakhīlo paṭhamasmiṃ gimhe*)[10] i.e. *Jyeṣṭhamūlīya*. Variants in date in other works have been discussed by P. V. Kane who gives also a very interesting account of the celebrations.[11] Another very informative discussion on the time when this festival was celebrated is given by J.J. Meyer who further shows that the festival of Indradhvaja was held for the purpose of obtaining rain (*Regenbedeutung*)[12]. As hinted by J.C. Jain

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1 Mehta: PBI p. 355.
2 Jain: LIJC pp. 216 ff.
3 BE I, 18, 18; NW II, 52, 20; II, 61, 13.
4 NW II, 80, 40; III, 31, 27; BE IV, 16, 37; NW II, 88, 9.
5 NW III, 31, 27.
6 BE IV, 16, 37.
7 NW II, 80, 40.
8 BE IV, 16. 37, (not NW)
9 Jain: LIJC p.216 & fn.
10 Khuddakapāṭha: Ratana Sutta.
11 Kane: HDK II pp. 824-826. For another account see Jain: LIJC pp. 216-217.
12 Meyer: Trilogie III pp. 113 ff. and p. 116.

the differences in the date may be explained on a geographical basis. Then, however, we would take the date given in the Rāmāyaṇa as representing a southern tradition rather than the Gauḍa (i.e. North-eastern)[1]. Still it remains merely a conjecture because the differences can also be due to chronological disparity; for instance the counterpart of this festival is celebrated today in Deccan in the month of Caitra.[2]

§ 64. Apart from this, no other festival is referred to in the epic. But there were many festive occasions such as almsgivings, sacrifices, weddings and *samājas* (*dānayajñavivāheṣu samājeṣu mahatsu ca*)[3]. To this list should be added royal consecrations, public receptions and royal processions. The significance of religious ceremonies, especially sacrifices, as festive occasions in India will be analysed in a subsequent chapter (VIII §§ 118 ff). A special feature of every festivity seems to have been the decoration of cities (III § 12). A public reception given to a distinguished visitor took the form of a minor festival as is revealed by the description of the reception accorded to Bharata at Girivraja.[4] The royal processions were indicative of a king's power and glory; as such they were carried out on a grand scale. Rāma went to the palace of Daśaratha followed by a procession of hundreds and thousands of horses and elephants.[5] In another procession Vānaras rode on 9000 elephants to the accompaniment of music from conches and drums.[6] The procession of Rāvaṇa comprised many women who carried golden pots of water and one of them held his white parasol.[7]

§ 65. More information is available in the Rāmāyaṇa as regards the recreations of the ancient Indians. The most popular outdoor recreation seems to have been visits to public parks. The people of Ayodhyā are said to play in beautiful parks.[8] From the account of the chaos caused by anarchy it can be implied that lovers walked in confidence in these parks[9] and that girls decked with gold ornaments met there to play in the evening.[10] The parks in the cities were of different kinds. The commonest appears to be the *udyāna*, a garden or a grove.[11] The *Ārāma*, too, might have been a similar garden.[12] Besides there were orchards (*cf. āmravana*)[13] and *Vihāras*, (places of recreation), which according to S. Vyas are "arbours for sport stationed at a distance of only one krośa from the city."[14] Forest-groves (*vana* and *upavana*), both natural and artificial, too, seem to have been places resorted to by

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1 Cf. Jain: LIJC p. 216 fn. 179.
2 Cf. Kane. HDK II p. 826.
3 BE II, 57, 13.
4 NW II, 1, 40-41.
5 NW II. 17, 31-32.
6 NW VI, 109, 31.
7 NW V, 13, 13-15.
8 NW II, 77, 21.
9 NW II, 73, 17.
10 BE II, 67, 17.
11 NW II, 36, 20; II, 50, 25; II, 52, 20; II, 73, 13; V, 1, 14; V, 11, 39.
12 NW II, 52, 20.
13 BE I, 5, 12.
14 NW V, 11, 39. Vyas: NIA, VIII p. 203.

people for recreation.[1] *Ākrīḍa*[2] has given rise to certain difficulties in rendering. The Commentary, Tilaka, of Rāma, quotes three interpretations, two of which regard it as a grove—a public park according to one and a special park for kings according to Tīrtha. The third interpretation suggests that *ākrīḍas* were pleasure-hills and as such one of the amenities of the parks.[3]

§ 66. Such amenities as pleasure-hills were available in the parks; there were sitting rooms or pavilions (*āsanagṛha*)[4], green houses (*latāgṛha* and *puṣpagṛha*)[5], and houses for sport (*krīḍāgṛha*)[6]. *Kāmasya gṛhas*,[7] according to Vyas, were "captivating structures dedicated to dalliance."[8] *Gṛhātigṛhakas* were houses built over houses according to Kataka and according to Tīrtha they were houses constructed for the recreation of chiefs, not far from their dwellings.[9] Vyas has apparently made a mistake in saying that they were "constructed far away from the city-dwellings"[10] when the commentary states "*gṛhān atītyānatidūre*". The BE makes reference to artificial hills made of wood (*dāruparvata*)[11]. As water-sport has been popular in ancient India, these parks were supplied with ponds (*jalāśaya*)[12]; the Uttarakāṇḍa describes how Arjuna went to Narmadā for water-sport along with the harem.[13]

§ 67. It has been already mentioned that people, especially girls, were accustomed to playing in the parks. But we have no data as regards what their games were. From a reference in the NW it appears that they sang and danced,[14] and a verse in the GE reveals that girls, in addition to singing, played with balls (kanduka).[15]

§ 68. Another form of outdoor recreation was hunting which appears to have been a speciality with the royalty. Rāma, with his brothers, is said to have gone out hunting[16] and when Guha saw the army of Bharata on its way to fetch Rāma back to Ayodhyā, he wondered if Bharata had come on hunting or for an elephant kraal.[17] The royalty took part in hunting for both flesh and sport. (*Māṃsahetor api mṛgān vihārārthāya dhanvinaḥ ghnanti Lakṣmaṇa rājāno.....*)[18]. A further use of this sport appears to be the opportunity it afforded for training in archery. It is actually called an exercise in archery (*dhanuvyāyāma*)[19]. It is clear that the soldiers were made to take part in hunting as a part of their training and the BE describes the soldiers of Ayodhyā as having

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1 NW II, 50, 25; II, 77, 22; V, 13, 8 ff.; V, 19, 37.
2 NW V, 11, 40 & 44; V, 1, 13.
3 Cf. Commy. on BE V, 2, 12.
4 NW V, 10, 5.
5 NW V, 4, 41; V, 7, 13.
6 NW V, 4, 42.
7 NW V, 4, 42.
8 Vyas: NIA, VIII p. 203.
9 NW V, 7, 13; Cf. Commy. on BE V, 12, 15.
10 Vyas: *op. cit.* p. 203.
11 BE V, 6, 37.
12 BE VII, 31, 9.
13 NW V, 1, 13.
14 NW I, 30, 12.
15 GE I, 9, 13.
16 NW I, 14, 28; III, 3, 7; BE II, 96, 9
17 NW II, 95, 4.
18 NW III, 48, 22.
19 NW II, 69, 17-18.

killed, either with weapons or with the power of their arms, lions, tigers and boars.[1] The Rāmāyaṇa further hints that dogs were trained for the chase for the dogs presented to Bharata by his grandfather are called clever and capable of killing tigers (*vyāghrasaṃhananāyutān*)[2]. It is interesting to note that hunting had been a popular recreation of the royalty till much later times. Aśoka refers to it in his Eighth Rock Edict[3] and Manusmṛti regards it as conducive to calamity although it is still allowed, according to Kullūkabhaṭṭa, because it ensures health through physical exercise.[4] The later Sanskrit literature abounds in descriptions of the royal chase.[5]

§ 69. Coming to quieter forms of entertainment, we find that the ancient Indians, as reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa, were fond of story-telling. The characters of the story spend their nights in hermitages listening to tales, narrated by the sages.[6] According to the Uttarakāṇḍa, which, however, gives the most information on this type of recreation, knowers of Purāṇas (i.e. ancient tales) narrated interesting stories, which were full of *dharma*, in the court of Rāma.[7] Rāma and his brothers related stories especially to lay emphasis on their points of view.[8] And the manner in which an opportunity was found to narrate a story in the last kāṇḍa, and to some extent in the first, is interesting as it reminds one of the Pañcatantra or the Hitopadeśa; a question from the listener leads to the narration of one or more tales.[9] The exact response of the ancient Indians to stories is succinctly expressed by both Rāma and Janaka in identical words: "There is to me no satiation of (listening to) wonderful tales" (*tṛptir āścaryabhūtānāṃ kathānāṃ nāsti me nṛpa*)[10]. And, naturally, as a disadvantage of anarchy is stated the fact that in times of anarchy those accustomed to stories (*kathāśīlāḥ*) would not be pleased by lovers of tales with stories.[11]

§ 70. From the stories included in the Bāla and the Uttara-kāṇḍas it appears that they generally contained the element of wonder and had a moral or a religious significance. But stories of a lighter vein were no doubt current. Jokes were cracked by friends of Bharata to make him happy when he was dejected.[12] Clowns, or rather literally, laughter-makers (*hāsyakārāḥ*), in the court of Rāma narrated comic stories[13] and a list of them is also available: *Vijayo madhumattaś ca kāśyapo maṅgalaḥ kulaḥ surājiḥ kāliyo bhadro dantavaktraḥ sumāgadhaḥ*[14]

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1 BE I, 5, 21.
2 NW II, 76, 24.
3 Sircar: *Select Inscriptions* p. 28.
4 Manusmṛti: VII, 47 and Commy. on VII, 52.
5 Śakuntalā: Act I; Raghuvaṃsa: Canto IX.
6 BE I, 23, 22; NW II, 58, 37; BE II, 54, 34; VII, 66, 16-17; VII, 71, 5.
7 BE VII, 37, 24.
8 Cf. BE VII, 85, 2; VII, 88.
9 Cf. BE VII, 88, 2-3; NW I, 21, 7-9.
10 BE VII, 55, 2; NW I, 61, 26.
11 BE II, 67, 16; GE II, 69, 16.
12 NW II, 75, 4.
13 BE VII, 43, 1-3.
14 BE VII, 43, 2.

This account, though in a late kāṇḍa, establishes the existence of a widespread practice of narrating comic stories in ancient India, as regards which the Buddhist data has been culled by Wijesekera.[1]

§ 71. *Goṣṭhi*, referred to in the BE as a means of entertainment arranged for Bharata at Girivraja,[2] might have been social meetings for conversation as are described in the Kāmasūtra.[3] It is somewhat far-fetched to regard this as a dramatic performance, although it is not altogether impossible because the later Sanskrit critics knew of a type of one-act plays of the same name.[4] Gambling had been too ancient a mode of recreation to lack any mention in the Rāmāyaṇa. Gambling with dice had been prevalent and the epic refers to the dice as *devana*[5] while the BE once calls it *akṣa*.[6] The trees bereft of leaves and fruit on account of Hanumat's shaking, are compared to defeated gamblers, who had thrown away their clothes and ornaments (*vikṣiptavastrābharaṇā dhūrtā iva parājitāḥ*)[7]. In a simile, again, the wager (*paṇa*) is mentioned.[8] It is not clear whether other forms of gambling were prevalent in the time reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa. No games, other than dice, are referred to in the Rāmāyaṇa. The attitude of the epic towards gambling is apparently one of indifference, thus signifying that it depicts the stage when gambling was not altogether denounced by law or was patronized by law as a source of revenue. That comes within the first of the four stages of the development of gambling, outlined by Hopkins i.e. when gambling is generally practised and casually privately condemned when the result is bad.[9]

§ 72. S. Vyas argues on the basis of two terms that the prevalence of chess or at least a familiarity with it is quite a plausibility.[10] In spite of the fact that Rāvaṇa is traditionally credited with the invention of the game, the Rāmāyaṇa makes no mention of it. And the two terms, *aṣṭāpada* and *caturaṅgabala*,[11] on which Vyas bases his argument, are ambiguous. *Aṣṭāpada* occurs in a metaphor, which describes the town-planning of Ayodhyā and the commentary (Tilaka) of Rāma records two meanings for it viz. gold (*suvarṇaṃ*) and gambling board (*dyūtaphalaka*)[12]. The latter meaning is the more probable. But this board need not necessarily be associated with chess, because the throwing of dice, too, needed a board which however according to a Buddhist account had thirty-six squares.[13] A piece of sculpture from Bharhut also represents such a board.[14] The only clue which could establish this as a

1 Wijesekera: IHQ. XVII pp. 196-206
2 BE II, 69, 5.
3 Chakladar: SLAI pp. 163 ff.
4 Sāhityadarpaṇa: VI,274. Cf. Monier Williams: Sanskrit-English Dictionary s.v.
5 NW V, 5, 53.
6 BE II, 75, 41.
7 NW V, 9, 20.
8 NW IV, 63, 10.
9 Hopkins: JAOS XIII p. 123.
10 Vyas: NIA, VIII p. 206.
11 NW I, 5, 13; I, 65, 3.
12 Commy. on BE I, 5, 16.
13 Rhys Davids: *Buddhist India* p. 50.
14 Cf. Rhys Davids: *Buddhist India* Plate III.

chess board is its association with the *Caturaṅgabala* (four-fold army); but no reference to the four-fold army in the epic can be taken as having any connection with chess. It would be unnatural to think that the division of the army into four was first done in the game of chess and then only in the actual army. As such the existence of the game of chess in ancient India cannot be proved with reference to these two terms which give us nothing definite.

§ 73. Among festive occasions reference was made to *samājas* which appear to have been frequent occurrences (V § 64). It is usually associated with *utsavas* which might have been festivals in general. The people were fond of *samājas* and *utsavas*[1] and Ayodhyā had them perpetually.[2] It is not easy to find out what actually the *samājas* were. Vyas thinks that they were recreation clubs, "where religious social and economic discourses as well as gambling, music, dancing and various games and sports were performed."[3] However ingenious his interpretation be it appears to be less satisfying. Due emphasis should be laid on the descriptions of them in the epic, though scanty; Trijaṭā dreamt of a samāja with songs, music and dance (*gītavāditranṛtyavān*)[4]; and the samājas which people would miss during anarchy are described as comprising many actors and dancers (*prabhūtanaṭanartakāḥ*)[5]. These comments help us to regard samājas as some sort of theatrical performance and when their counterpart in the Buddhist texts to wit, Samajja, is taken into consideration we can reckon them as occasions when "crowds of men, women and children gathered together and witnessed various kinds of shows and performances, dancing and music, ballad-recitations and pantomimes, combats of elephants, horses and rams, bouts at quarter-staff and wrestling."[6] The theatrical performance might have been a special feature of the *samājas*.

§ 74. The Rāmāyaṇa gives us positive data on the popularity of drama as a source of entertainment. When Bharata was dejected his friends staged comic plays (*nāṭakāni...hāsyāni*)[7] and the reaction expected from him was to be happy and sorry at correct places, for Bharata explained that he was not happy at times he should be pleased as he was thinking of the dream and also that he was dejected at inappropriate places of the play.[8] Performances of actors formed a part of the celebrations of Rāma's consecration.[9] And actors (*śailūṣa* and *naṭa*) were in the retinues of kings and princes.[10] There is usually a doubt as to whether the dramatic performances of ancient times were mere panto-

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1 NW II, 52, 20; III, 41, 21; II, 114, 22.
2 NW I, 5, 15.
3 Vyas: NIA, VIII, p. 203.
4 NW V, 21, 21.
5 NW II, 73, 14.
6 Mehta: PBI p.355.
7 NW II, 75, 4.
8 NW II, 75, 20-21.
9 NW II, 8, 14.
10 NW II, 94, 27; BE VII, 64, 3.

mimes or ones where actors actually spoke. Vyas seems to be definite that "the Rāmāyaṇa controverts the theory of the dumb show"[1]; but the term on which he bases his argument (i.e. *vyāmiśraka*, explained in the commentary as plays in mixed dialects such as Prakrits)[2] occurs in the NW as *vyāyāmika*[3] showing thereby that the recensions do not agree in attributing to Rāma proficiency in dramas of mixed dialects. But our problem becomes simple if we connect, on the basis of the Buddhist evidence,[4] the actors and the *hāsyakāras*, who evoke laughter by narrating comic tales; then the actors in comic plays could be regarded as speaking. A reference to actresses (*śailūṣī*) gives the general impression that they were immoral;[5] they appear to have been harlots as well. The BE refers in the same context to the *śailūṣa* (masculine), which is interpreted in the Commentary as "one who lives on his wife"[6] i.e. one who gets his wife to earn as a prostitute. The moral degradation of the class of actors might have had certain repercussions on the popularity of drama though we have no definite data as to when and to what extent the popular approval was jeopardized by the conduct of the actors and actresses.

§ 75. Listening to ballads and panegyrics seems to have been another popular form of entertainment. For the function of reciting them a number of singers was employed; of them the most important were the *sūtas*, *māgadhas*, and *vandins* who are mentioned together or singly as praising kings and princes on special occasions such as consecrations, receptions and funerals,[7] and as singing in the morning to awake kings and princes.[8] *Sūtas* are said to sing their panegyrics along with *vaitālikas*.[9] Among these singers the *sūta* occupied a very important place in ancient India. His position in the royal household, in addition to his duties as a singer, is very clearly described in the Rāmāyaṇa in delineating the character of Sumantra. This account is of utmost significance because of the diverse theories current among scholars about the function of the *sūta*.[10]

§ 76. Sumantra sang an eulogy of Daśaratha in performing the ceremony of waking him (*pratibodhanamaṅgalam*)[11]. He served as a repository of ancient lore and for the benefit of Daśaratha related what he had heard from Sanatkumāra as regards Ṛṣyaśṛṅga and Daśaratha's future.[12] These are the normal functions of the Sūta. Besides, Suman-

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1 Vyas: NIA, VIII p. 210.
2 BE II, 1, 27. Cf. Commy.
3 NW II, 3, 16.
4 Cf. Wijesekera: IHQ XVII p.197.
5 NW II, 33, 8.
6 Commy. on BE II, 30, 8.
7 NW II, 29, 14; II, 94, 15; II, 118, 26; II, 16, 56; II, 16, 14 & 22; II, 87, 23; II, 17, 43.
8 NW II, 100, 9; II, 86, 1; BE II, 65, 2; NW II, 16, 20-32.
9 NW VI, 108, 3.
10 Cf. De & Das Gupta: *Sanskrit Literature* pp.XII ff; Siddhanta: HAI pp. 23 & 63 f. Walter Ruben: STR pp. 253-263.
11 NW II, 15, 15-18.
12 NW I, 9, 14.

tra was a minister; he is called an *amātya*,[1] a *mantrin*[2] and more often the best of ministers (*mantrisattama*)[3]. He was also a charioteer[4] and as such he was made to carry messages.[5] He, further, helped Lakṣmaṇa as almost an attendant in perparing a bed for Rāma;[6] and he was considered by Rāma to be a friend for he says to Sumantra, "There is no friend like you to the Ikṣvākus."[7] Moreover he is called a Brahman; in fact, the epic implies that he was a leading Brahman in stating "*Sumantraprabhṛtīn sarvān brāhmaṇān.*"[8] He is described as the son of a *Sūta*, which indicates that the office of a *sūta* had been hereditary.[9]

§ 77. Whether Sumantra represents the common *sūta* or a privileged one is not quite certain. If the first alternative is more probable, the data of the Rāmāyaṇa can be made use of as depicting an important stage in the evolution of the functions and the position of the *sūta*. If it is otherwise, the epic reveals the position which could be attained by a *Sūta*. In either case the evidence of the Rāmāyaṇa controverts certain concepts about the *sūta* current in the Mahābhārata and the later works. He is according to them the offspring of a Kṣatriya and a Brāhmaṇī;[10] but the Rāmāyaṇa sees nothing unusual in calling the *sūta* a Brahman. It is interesting to note that the ancient literature records instances where the *Sūta* was regarded as a prominent figure in political circles as well as in the king's retinue. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad mentions *sūtas* among the officers who receive a king at his approach to a village or a district.[11] The Brāhmaṇas in laying down rules for the performance of the Rājasūya enjoin offerings to *sūtas* who are reckoned as *ratnins*, implying thus that their approval was necessary for the consecration of a king.[12]

§ 78. The association of the *sūta's* duty as a charioteer with these responsible functions is inexplicable; and it is noteworthy that the Rāmāyaṇa speaks of the sūta often as a charioteer (*sārathi*) and as one living by driving chariots (*rathakuṭumbin*)[13]: further his duty, as explained by Rāvaṇa, was to protect the rider in times of difficulty.[14] We may, however, attempt to solve this apparent paradox. The *sūta* was an officer of state, who probably was the companion of the kings and princes in their expeditions. His position as a trusted officer might have led to his being the charioteer in battle—a position of immense

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1 NW I, 9, 14.
2 NW II, 39, 1.
3 NW II, 16, 17; II, 53, 10; II, 63, 1; II, 61, 6.
4 NW II, 16, 55; II, 43, 27; II, 61, 16; II, 5. 17; II, 55, 10.
5 NW II, 15, 26; II, 93, 3.
6 NW II, 48, 11.
7 NW II. 53, 19.
8 NW II, 74, 1.
9 NW II, 96, 2.
10 Sidhanta: HAI p.63; Shama Sastri: AK p.165. Manusmṛti: X,11.
11 Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanisad: IV, 3, 37
12 Patil: CHVP p.135; cites Jayaswal Hindu Polity II p.27.
13 NW II, 6, 3-6; II, 43, 48; II, 48, 16; II, 77, 26; III, 29, 45; VI, 18, 33; VI, 78, 3; VI, 89, 3; VI, 86, 21, etc.
14 NW VI, 86, 13.

responsibility. In fact even the author of the Bhagavadgītā narrative saw nothing derogatory to Kṛṣṇa in depicting him as the charioteer of Arjuna. The *sūta's* function as the panegyrist, probably, was due to the fact that he was a first-hand observer of fights and victories. And as the Brahmans in the Eastern region of northern India do not appear to have exercised as much power as their brethren in the West, this position though subordinate to that of the Kṣatriya—was acceptable to them. If so the lower social rank given to them in the Mahābhārata and the other works of the West is a Brahmanical reaction to denounce the Brahmans, who were *sūtas* under Kṣatriyas. This, however, is purely conjectural and no final solution of the problem is possible with the scanty data at our disposal.

§ 79. Though the *sūta* had many functions to perform in addition to singing, the *Māgadhas*[1] and *Vandins*[2] were only singers and panegyrists. In what respects the *sūtas*, *māgadhas*, *vandins* and *vaitālikas* differed from one another in their singing is not clear from the data in the Rāmāyaṇa. It is likely that the *vaitālika* had the special function of announcing the hour of the day.[3] The distinction between the first two according to caste[4] is to be examined, for it is even possible that the *māgadhas* were so named after the territory of their origin. *Vandin* apparently is connected with the root *vand:* to praise. Similar bards were the *stāvakas* and the *svastikāras*, those who eulogized kings etc., and those who cried out the benediction "*svasti.*"[5] The kings and princes seem to have been so fond of being praised that servants were only too ready to come out with eulogies on their victories and so forth.[6]

§ 80. The bards, so far mentioned, were employed by the royalty. Those who looked to the popular entertainment were in all probability the *Kuśīlavas* who, like the twin sons of Rāma in the Uttarakāṇḍa, sang for the recreation of the populace such ballads as the story of Rāma. They were paid for their trouble for we see that the sons of Rāma received presents from sages[7] and were offered 18,000 pieces of gold or gold coins by Rāma.[8] That the bards expected payment from their audiences is borne out by the advice given by Vālmīki that Kuśa and Lava should not crave for any wealth.[9] The name *Kuśīlava* for the bards is derived, according to tradition, from Kuśa and Lava, the twin sons of Rāma, who recited the Rāmāyaṇa. Grierson gives the etymology *ku-śīlava*: of bad or improper conduct, which is not improbable.[10] There is the possibility that the names of Kuśa and Lava were created in order to explain the term for popular bards.

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1 NW II, 1, 41; II, 8, 6; II, 16, 14; II, 86, 1.
2 NW II, 17, 33; II, 71, 3; II, 1, 41; II, 35, 20; BE VII 37, 3.
3 Monier Williams: Sanskrit-English Dictionary. s.v.
4 Sidhanta: HAI p.63.
5 NW II, 94, 14 & 24.
6 Cf. BE VII, 43, 14-16.
7 NW I, 4, 60-61.
8 BE VII, 94, 19.
9 BE VII, 93, 11.
10 Grierson: IA XXIII p.55.

§ 81. Besides ballad-recitation, there were as means of recreation, music and dancing, which are mentioned as the triple symphony, *gīta*, *vādya* and *nṛtya*, vocal and instrumental music and dance[1]. Music was resorted to on numerous occasions in the daily life of the ancient Indian. At weddings[2] and royal receptions[3], in the battle-field[4] and in hunting,[5] in waking the royalty[6] and in general merry-making[7] music had been given a prominent place. The vocalists (*gāyaka*) sang songs in melodious voices to the accompaniment of instrumental music[8] and their songs according to the Rāmāyaṇa were panegyrics when they sang to awake the royalty.[9] The BE once describes vocalists as *śrutiśīlāḥ*, which according to the Commentary means "*tantrīnāda vibhājanaśīlāḥ*" (those capable of distinguishing the tones of a lute)[10]. Further, disorderly singing of the type of a sing-song seems to have been a feature of merry-making.[11]

§ 82. Besides vocalists are mentioned "clappers", (*tālāvacara* or *tālāpacara* and *pāṇivādaka*)[12] who beat time by clapping,[13] and the instrumentalists, who were clever in playing all instruments (*kuśalaḥ sarvavādyaiśca*)[14] and whose instruments are called either *tūrya* or *vāditra*.[15]

§ 83. Many musical instruments have been used in India. In analysing the accounts of battles and processions we find that the commonest instruments used in producing music for these occasions were the conch-shell and the kettle-drum (*bheri*)[16]. The large kettle-drum (*dundubhi*) was also sometimes used,[17] while a number of varieties of drums such as *mṛdaṅga*, *paṭaha*, *ḍiṇḍima* are also referred to as being beaten in battle.[18] Besides the conch-shell is once mentioned the flute *veṇu*.[19]

§ 84. The Rāmāyaṇa offers us an interesting list of musical instruments which were in vogue in ancient India, though unfortunately we have no details about them whatsoever. They may be grouped, as P. C. Dharma has already done,[20] under the headings: percussion instruments, wind instruments and stringed instruments. In the first

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1 NW V, 15, 10; VI, 38, 57; VI, 38, 61; II, 1, 40; V, 6, 6; I, 69, 28.
2 NW I, 69, 28.
3 NW II, 1, 40; VI, 108, 15
4 NW VI, 58, 14; VI, 56, 18; IV, 31, 25; VI, 44, 31; VI, 53, 11; VI, 33, 29; VI, 19, 13.
5 NW II, 11, 35.
6 NW V, 13, 3; VI, 38, 57 & 61; II, 66, 14.
7 NW I, 8, 44; VI, 109, 13; II, 8, 14; BE I, 18, 19.
8 NW II, 104, 62; BE V, 61, 14-19.
9 NW V, 13, 3; BE II, 65, 2.
10 BE II, 65, 2.
11 NW II, 104, 62.
12 Cf. Wijesekera: IHQ XVII pp. 198 ff. on "*Tālapuṭa*".
13 BE II, 65, 4; II, 3, 17; VII, 91, 15.
14 NW VI, 108, 3.
15 NW I, 72, 6; II, 8, 8; II, 52, 19; V, 2, 11 & 22; V, 5, 140; II, 16, 14; II, 17, 33.
16 NW VI, 58, 14; VI, 56, 18; IV, 31, 25; V, 100, 1; VI, 53, 11; VI, 108, 15; VI, 109, 31.
17 NW VI, 44, 31; VI, 33, 29.
18 NW V, 44, 28; VI, 19, 3; GE IV, 38, 34; VI, 49, 25.
19 NW VI, 19, 13.
20 Dharma: IC. IV. pp 450-451

category are to be included the various types of drums which in the order of frequency of reference are *bheri* (a kettle-drum; V § 83)[1], *mṛdaṅga* (a drum or a tabour)[2], *dundubhi* (a kind of large kettle drum)[3], *paṇava* (a small drum)[4], *paṭaha* (a kind of kettle-drum or tabour)[5], *muraja* (tambourine)[6], *ḍiṇḍima* (a small drum)[7] and *maḍḍuka*.[8] The *bheri* and the *dundubhi* were beaten with a drum-stick (*koṇa*) which was made of gold.[9] And Patil is definitely making a mistake in considering the *bheri* mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa to be a trumpet.[10] *Paṇava* means also a kind of cymbal and as such it is possible that the references in the Rāmāyaṇa are to a pair of cymbals rather than to a drum because, otherwise, we have among instruments of the war band no mention of the cymbals which formed an important feature in the ancient Indian orchestra; *tāla*[11] perhaps was a kind of cymbal and *svastika*[12] too was some sort of a metallic instrument although we cannot be certain as to what it was. *Murava*, mentioned by Dharma,[13] is quite clearly the same as *muraja*, to which it is corrected in BE V, 11, 6. The drums naturally had a leather facing which had to be kept warm to get the correct note and the NW has a simile referring to the discordant notes produced by a wet *dundubhi*.[14]

§ 85. Two earthenware instruments are referred to; the northern recensions mention *kumbhamukha*[15] which was used to put up Kumbhakarṇa and the southern recension cites *kalaśī*[16] as one of the instruments played by Rāvaṇa's wives. The latter is doubtful as the context does not necessarily demand the name of a musical instrument; in fact the Commentary takes it as a pot full of water (*kalaśīm jalasambhṛtām*)[17]. The *kumbhamukha* might have been something similar to *kumbhathūṇa* of the Dīgha Nikāya,[18] but in both cases the doubt exists as to whether they had leather facings or were empty pots, beaten at the mouth so as to produce a series of base notes, as is sometimes done by South Indian jugglers. Here we may also note the etymology of *mṛdaṅga* suggested by Fox-Strangways: he explains it as "*mṛd-aṅga*"—of a 'clay body.'[19] If it is correct, the *mṛdaṅga*, too, has to be regarded as an earthenware instrument. But there is no general consensus of opinion on this interpretation. The Pali form *mutiṅga*, which cannot be in any way divided into *mṛd* and *aṅga*, shows though not conclusively, that the

1 NW V, 4, 28; VI, 38, 42 & 46 (see 178, fn. 16).
2 NW I, 5, 15; II, 100; 8, V, 14, 28; V, 5, 127 & 131; VI, 38, 51.
3 NW I, 20, 5; II, 4, 2; III, 2, 17.
4 NW II, 42, 41; V, 5, 133; VI, 38, 51; BE VII, 77, 13.
5 NW I, 20, 5; V, 5, 128.
6 NW II, 42, 41; V, 5, 139; VI, 38, 42; BE V, 11, 6.
7 NW V, 5, 134; GE IV, 49, 25.
8 BE V, 10, 38.
9 NW VI, 38, 46; BE II, 81, 2.
10 Patil: CHVP p. 217.
11 NW V, 4, 48.
12 NW VI, 109, 40.
13 Dharma: IC IV p. 451.
14 NW III, 66, 7 (not BE & GE)
15 NW VI, 38, 51; GE VI, 37, 52 (not BE)
16 BE V, 10, 46;
17 Cf. Commy. on BE V, 10, 46.
18 Digha Nikāya (P.T.S.) I, 6.
19 Fox Strangways: MHFS p. 10 fn.

possibility of such a derivation is remote. Monier Williams' conjecture: *mṛdaṃ+ga*—going about while being beaten,[1] is interesting, although the most probable interpretation would be to regard it as an onomatopoeia.

§ 86. The stringed instruments mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa include a variety of lutes, which in the order of frequency, are *vīṇā*,[2] *tantrī*,[3] *vallakī*[4] and *vipañcī*.[5] The *vīṇā* had been a popular instrument and it appears to have been a kind of harp with seven strings. Its construction is discussed in the Jātakas, from which Mehta has reconstructed an account of the *vīṇā* in his chapter on arts and sciences.[6] The Jātakas state that it was played upon with the finger-nails (agganakkhehi)[7]. But the Rāmāyaṇa, in two verses of the BE, mentions a gadget which was used in playing upon the *vīṇā*;[8] it is called the *koṇa*, which the Commentary explains as the *vādanadaṇḍa*.[9] Though the commentator's explanation is apt to tempt one to regard the "*koṇa*" to be something like the bow used in playing the modern violin, it appears to be most probably a "plucking triangle" used on the tip of the fingers in plucking the strings. The data offered by the epic is not sufficient to distinguish among the four types of lutes; but it is worth while noting that the *vallakī* is usually mentioned along with the *tantrī*.

§ 87. The wind instruments to be mentioned are the *śaṅkha*[10] and the *veṇu* (flute).[11] The flute as the name itself suggests was made out of the bamboo stalk. The term *veṇugaṇa* in NW II, 86, 2, may denote the kind of primitive mouth-organ made by tying together a number of flutes, tuned to different notes; but it is used rather ambiguously here so that it can mean also "a multitude of flutes"

§ 88. *Celikā*, which occurs in the BE[12] cannot be identified and the commentator is also not sure of its exact meaning for he says: "*Celikā vādyaviśeṣa ity āhuḥ.*"[13] The NW has instead the term *pīṭhikā*.[14] The term *ātodya* of the BE seems to have been a general term for musical instruments.[15]

§ 89. Mythologically music has been associated with the Gandharvas just as dance was with the Apsaras. The Rāmāyaṇa mentions a number of instances when the Gandharvas sang and the Apsaras danced.[16] And the GE finds that the hermitage of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, wherein

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1 Monier-Williams: Sanskrit-English Dictionary. s.v.
2 NW I, 5, 15; II, 42, 10; II, 66, 14; II, 104, 26; V, 5, 129.
3 NW IV, 24, 25; GE IV, 33, 26; NW V, 3, 7.
4 NW IV, 24, 25; GE IV, 33, 26.
5 BE V, 10, 41; NW V p. 65 fn. No. 10.
6 Mehta: PBI pp. 313-315.
7 Mehta; PBI p. 314.
8 BE VI, 24, 42; II, 71, 29.
9 Commy. on BE VI, 24, 42.
10 NW I, 20, 5; II, 86, 2; II, 100, 8; V, 4, 28; V11, 37 (see p.178, fn. 16).
11 NW I, 5, 15; II, 42, 41; II, 66, 14, IV, 24, 25; V, 5, 130, V, 11, 37.
12 BE V, 11, 6.
13 Cf. Commy. on BE V, 11, 6.
14 NW V, 5, 139.
15 BE V, 10, 49.
16 NW VI, 109, 85; II, 104, 25; BE I, 18, 17.

the girls sent by Lomapāda sang and danced, could be best compared to the city of the Gandharvas.[1] Tumbaru (Pali *Timbaru*), who is cited in the song of Pañcaśikha in the Sakkapañha sutta,[2] is mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa, too, as a leading Gandharva, well-versed in song;[3] he is also said to be attached to Rambhā.[4] Along with Tumbaru the Rāmāyaṇa names as kings of Gandharvas (*gandharvarājānaḥ*) Nārada, Gopa, Parvata and Sūryamaṇḍala;[5] and the GE gives a similar list which runs as Nārada, Tumbaru, Gārgya, Sudāma and Hāhāhūhūḥ.[6] These are important in so far as the epic establishes the antiquity of the musical traditions which have found a prominent place in the theory of Indian music.

§ 90. The Rāmāyaṇa records a few glimpses of a well-established theory of music; but the majority of the references are in the latest portions of the Bāla and the Uttarakāṇḍa and they are mainly connected with the recitation of the Rāmāyaṇa by Kuśa and Lava. It is difficult in the light of our comments in Chapter I (I §§ 64 ff) to regard these as authentic. In the more authentic sections we hear of the theory of music as *Gandharvavidyā*[7] which the Bāla Kāṇḍa calls *Gandharva-tattva*.[8] We find therein also references to *tristhāna*, *svara*, *tāna*, *śruti*, *tāla*, and *akṣara*: Hanumat heard in Laṅkā songs, adorned with *tristhāna* and *svara*,[9] Tumbaru sang in divine *tāna* (*divyatāneṣu*)[10], the singers who woke Daśaratha were *śrutiśīlāḥ* and the songs heard in Kiṣkindhā had equal *tāla* (*samatāla*) and *akṣaras*.[11] These musical terms are supplemented in the Bāla and Uttara Kāṇḍas with citations to *bhāva*,[12] *svara*,[13] *mūrchana*,[14] *saptajātī*,[15] *pāṭyajāti*,[16] *saptasvara*, *tripramāṇa*,[17] *rāga*,[18] *laya*,[19] *mātra*,[20] *mārga*[21] and *kauśika*.[22]

§ 91. In theory *tristhāna* are the three voice registers[23] such as *mandra* (low or base), *madhya* (middle) and *tāra* (high)[24] and *svara* or *jāti* are the seven primary notes such as *ṣaḍja*, *ṛṣabha*, etc., of the octave; *pāṭyajāti*, too, represent these seven notes. While *'āna* is a melodic figure,[25] loosely used for drag note called generally *ekaśruti*, *tāla* is a musical rhythm. *Tripramāṇa*, which Griffith explains doubtfully as "triple measure — perhaps the bass, tenor and treble or quick slow and

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1 GE I, 9, 16.
2 Digha Nikāya: II pp. 265 ff.
3 NW II, 104, 18; III, 5, 41; V, 97, 42.
4 NW III, 5, 44.
5 NW II, 104, 48; Cf. VI, 81, 194.
6 GE VI, 92, 70.
7 NW II, 1, 25.
8 BE I, 4, 10.
9 NW V, 2, 26.
10 NW V, 97, 42, (not BE & GE).
11 BE IV, 33, 21.
12 NW I, 4, 54.
13 NW I, 4, 54; BE I, 4, 10.
14 BE I, 4, 10.
15 NW I, 4, 43; BE I, 4, 8.
16 BE VII, 94, 2.
17 NW I, 4, 42.
18 BE VII, 93, 8.
19 BE I, 4, 8; VII, 94, 3; VIII 71, 15; VII, 93, 15.
20 BE VII, 94, 7.
21 BE I, 4, 36.
22 NW IV, 62, 40.
23 Fox Strangways: MHFS p. 82.
24 Commentary on BE I, 4, 10.
25 Fox Strangways: MHFS p. 82.

middle time"[1], represent according to the commentary the threefold tempo-*druta* (quick) *madhya* (middle) and *vilambita* (slow)[2]. *Mūrchanā* is defined in a quotation in the commentary as "where the notes are full (*pūrṇa*) is said to be the mūrchanā"[3]; Dharma takes it to mean "scales"[4] while it is, as Monier Williams defines, the regulated rise and fall of sounds through the musical scale.[5] The English term "scale" is less satisfactory in defining "*mūrchanā*" as the theorists normally take it to be the two *grāmas*,[6] upon which the *mūrchanās* are built. And Monier Williams' explanation seems to be based on sound musical authority.[7] Fox Strangways translates *mūrchanā* by mode.[8] While *mātra* is a musical measure of time, *laya* is the speed or tempo which seems to have been ensured by the accompaniment of the lute and hence the usual epithet of good singing: *tantrīlayasamanvita*.[9] As Dharma has observed the Rāmāyaṇa stresses the importance of clear enunciation just as much as maintaining the rhythm,[10] and thus a good song was expected to be clear as regards words and letters (*padākṣara*)[11]. *Mārga* is said to be the style in which Kuśa and Lava recited the Rāmāyaṇa; the Commentary distinguishes between this and the other style Deśī by taking *mārga* to be Sanskrit while the other is Prakrit.[12]

§ 92. Finally, the terms *rāga* and *kauśika* (sometimes kaiśika)[13] are of special significance because they are considered to be the only references to the *rāgas* of Indian music. Kuśa and Lava are requested not to fall away from the *rāga* (most likely in this context: the tune); but the commentator seems to understand it as the sweetness of voice (*kaṇṭhamādhurya*)[14]. *Kauśika* (*kaiśika*) is met with in the compound *Kauśikācārya* denoting the musicians who sang to Hanumat as he flew over to Laṅkā. P. C. Dharma seems to follow Govindarāja when she says, "The *Kaiśika*.....is said to be one kind of Rāag."[15] It is true that Kauśika is one of the six rāgas enumerated by Bharata;[16] but the context does not permit such an interpretation as "teachers of the *Kauśika-rāga*" for *Kauśikācārya*. The Commentary (Tilaka) gives a broader definition of Kaiśika as "*gānanṛtyavidyā*" (art of singing and dancing)[17]. As the researches of V. Raghavan show *Kauśika* means

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1 Griffith: Rāmāyaṇa (Translation) I, p. 30 fn.
2 Commentary on BE I, 4, 8.
3 Commy. on BE I, 4, 10. Probably the commentator had in mind the first of the four-fold classification of mūrchanas i.e. Sampūrṇa; Bhāratīya Nāṭyaśastra XXVIII (Kāvyamālā 42) 33-34.
4 Dharma: IC IV p. 450.
5 Monier Wiliiams: Sanskrit-English Dictionary s.v.
6 Saṅgītaratnākara IV, 1ff.
7 Ibid IV, 9ff.
8 Fox Strangways MHFS p. 82.
9 See p. 181, fn. 19.
10 Dharma: IC IV p. 449.
11 NW IV, 9, 20; BE IV, 33, 21; GE I, 9, 22.
12 Commy. on BE I, 4, 36.
13 Cf. Raghavan: JOR XV p. 7 fn.
14 Commy. on BE VII, 93, 8.
15 Dharma: IC IV, p. 447
16 Monier-Williams: Sanskrit-English Dictionary. s.v. rāga.
17 Commy. on BE V, 1, 163.

a community of musicians[1]—and accordingly *Kauśikācāryas* were master musicians.

§ 93. Dancing, too, was resorted to as a form of recreation. Rāvaṇa's wives were clever in dancing and playing instruments (*nṛttavāditra*)[2] while Hema excelled in singing and dancing (*nṛtyagīta*)[3]. Women danced on the occasion of the royal reception to Bharata at Girivraja[4] and the army of Bharata enjoyed themselves at the hermitage of Bharadvāja by dancing in addition to singing and laughing.[5] Rāma and Sītā are said to have watched beautiful women, well versed in dance and song, dancing under the influence of liquor in the Aśokavanikā.[6] It appears that dancing was usually done to the accompaniment of instrumental music.[7] As already stated the Rāmāyaṇa associates dancing with the *apsaras*[8] and Alambuṣā, Miśrakeśī, Puṇḍarikā and Vāmanā are said to have danced to entertain Bharata.[9] The GE mentions that Urvaśī, Menakā, Rambhā, Pañcacūḍā and Tilottamā danced to celebrate Rāma's victory over Rāvaṇa.[10]

§ 94. The foregoing discussion makes it abundantly clear that the ancient Indians of the age reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa had a wide variety of recreations although the more vigorous and warlike types such as chariot-racing of the Vedic age and cattle-raids of the Mahābhārata are conspicuous by their absence. It may be concluded in analysing their games and forms of entertainment that the Rāmāyaṇa depicts the life of a people far quieter than those met with in the Mahābhārata and the Vedic literature.

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1 Raghavan: JOR XV pp. 1-7.
2 NW V, 5, 124.
3 NW IV, 42, 18.
4 NW II, 1, 40.
5 BE II, 91, 62.
6 BE VII, 42, 20-22.
7 NW II, 1, 40.
8 NW II, 104, 26; I, 40, 25; I, 69,28; BE I, 73, 38.
9 NW II, 104, 49.
10 GE VI, 92, 71.

CHAPTER VI

SEX, MARRIAGE AND WOMEN

A. Personal Beauty, Love and Sexual Gratification

§ 1. As the Rāmāyaṇa seeks to extol Rāma and Sītā as ideals in every respect, we can from the descriptions of their forms reconstruct the ancient Indian view of personal beauty. Rāma was dark and had red eyes, a round (moon-like) face, a broad chest, large arms, and shoulders similar to those of a bull; the broad chest is normally compared to that of a lion while the eyes were of the shape of lotus petals.[1] To these characteristics the BE adds that the collar-bones were hidden (*gūḍhajatruḥ*)[2] and the stomach was small (*kṛśodara*)[3] besides the arms being long as to reach the knees.[4] From a comment on Lakṣmaṇa's personality, we know further that the golden complexion (*śuddhajāmbūnadaprabhaḥ*) and black curly hair also enhanced a male's handsomeness.[5] These characteristics of a male as reflected in the epic reveal that the hallmark of one's personality was manliness; and youth, when it was best manifested, was regarded as the most important period of a man's life. In fact it is called the "*phalakāla*"—the period of fruition or the fruitful period.[6] It is, however, not clear from the Rāmāyaṇa what age was actually regarded as the average for this period. Daśaratha's statement that Rāma could not be sent away to fight against the Rākṣasas as he was less than sixteen years of age[7] may be interpreted as indicating sixteen as the age of majority; this, however, is open to doubt. On the other hand a description of gods, attributed to Rāma, throws more light on this question; Rāma says, the gods "bear the form as if they are twentyfive years old; for this is said to be the age of gods for ever."[8] Paying due attention to the possibility that the characteristics of the gods are fundamentally based on those that are human, twenty-five can be regarded as the ideal age for a young man in ancient India.

§ 2. The Rāmāyaṇa shows that the concept of feminine beauty had been far subtler, and the numerous descriptions of beautiful women in the epic provides us with sufficient data on the subject. And Sītā, of course, is portrayed as the prettiest of them. While the broad chest and

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1 NW II, 45, 18-19; II, 100, 11; II, 113, 26.
2 BE II, 48, 29.
3 BE VII, 46, 31.
4 BE II, 48, 29.
5 NW VI, 4, 23.
6 NW II, 46, 8; II, 57, 22.
7 NW I, 18, 2.
8 NW III, 6, 12-13.

strong arms alone were the significant features of a man, a woman had to be perfect in all her limbs and parts of the body to conform to the standard of beauty as conceived in the Rāmāyaṇa. A woman was appreciated for the "sweetness of form and youth" (*rūpayauvanamādhurya*)[1] which, though undefined in the epic can be explained with reference to the descriptions of women in the three recensions.

§ 3. Firstly a beautiful woman was expected to be delicate (*sukumāra*);[2]. she is slim by nature (*svabhāvatanu*)[3] and has well-formed limbs.[4] The complexion of Sītā was dark and it appears to have been the ideal too, although the Rāmāyaṇa does not specifically mention it.[5] Hair had to be black (*nīla* or *asita*), long and curly,[6] while the face was round and charming like a lotus or the full-moon.[7] The eyes were to be large, red in the corners and of the shape of lotus petals;[8] and the eye-brows were to be charming and well-set (*susaṃsthita*)[9]. A prominent nose added to the beauty of the face;[10] and so did red lips,[11] similar to the *bimba* fruit, and good teeth.[12] Pretty cheeks and ears, further, are noted as features of feminine beauty in the GE.[13]

§ 4. Further, the breasts were considered to be a special item contributing to the beauty of a woman. They were expected to be round (*vṛtta*) and full-grown (*pīna*), up-turned (*unnata*), pressed together (*saṃhata*) and comparable to "the fruit of a palm", which may be the king-coconut[14]—a common simile in Ceylon to describe full-grown breasts. While the waist was to be slender[15] like a diamond altar (*vajravedi*)[16] so that it could be held by the hand,[17] the hip and loins were considered beautiful if they were large,[18] according to the Uttarakāṇḍa, like the frame (*kūbara*) of a chariot,[19] or like a golden wheel.[20] The hip was so important according to the ancient Indian standards of beauty that a common epithet—even a term of address—to a beautiful woman was "suśroṇe" i. e. having pretty hips.[21] A further feature was the line of black abdominal hairs coming upto the navel;[22] the GE conceives it to be dividing the hip in two.[23] Lastly, the thighs were to be round and

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1 NW I, 1, 30.
2 NW V, 14, 18; III, 51, 20; BE II 61, 4.
3 NW V, 74, 17-18.
4 NW V, 14, 18; BE III, 31, 29; VII, 24, 7.
5 NW V, 10, 29; V, 74, 16; BE II, 61, 4; III, 31. 29.
6 NW V, 10, 30; V, 13, 25; VI, 38, 60; BE, VII, 24, 7.
7 NW V, 74, 12 & 14; BE VI, 12, 16; III, 34, 14; VII, 24, 7.
8 NW V, 10, 31; III, 51, 15 & 17; BE III, 34, 14.
9 NW VI, 107, 94; GE III, 52, 28.
10 NW IV, 57, 12; BE VI, 12, 16; III, 34, 15.
11 NW V, 10, 30.
12 NW V, 74, 14; III, 51, 15.
13 GE III, 52, 29-30.
14 NW V, 10, 29; III, 51, 14; IV, 57, 12; VI, 38, 60; VII, 31, 19; V, 13, 25; V, 74, 15.
15 NW IV, 57, 13; BE VI, 12, 14.
16 NW VII, 32, 13; BE VII, 24, 7.
17 NW III, 51, 18.
18 NW V, 10, 30; IV, 57, 13; BE VI, 12, 14; NW VI, 38, 60.
19 BE VII, 24, 8.
20 BE VII, 26, 24.
21 NW VI, 107, 94; V, 13, 25; I, 59, 5; GE III, 52, 31.
22 NW V, 14, 21.
23 GE III, 52, 32.

full like the trunk of an elephant.[1] And the feet of the hue of a full-blown lotus and with delicate toes with reddish nails and bright-red soles were also a mark of beauty.[2] The arms and hands, however, have not been described other than in one instance in the GE wherein Rāvaṇa describes Sītā's hands as beautiful and red like a lotus petal.[3]

§ 5. The foregoing paragraphs offer data sufficient to lead us to the conclusion that the Rāmāyaṇa not only reflects a high standard of aesthetic appreciation of the feminine form but also sets down a concept of beauty to be followed by later artists and poets. The word-pictures found in the epic are graphic and are cognate with the paintings of Ajanta and Sigiriya; in plastic art a representation of feminine form described in the Rāmāyaṇa may be traced in the figure of Sirimā Devatā at Bharhut,[4] wherein the particular parts of the body emphasized in the epic description have been considerably exaggerated. The descriptions of damsels who sought to please Sarvārthasiddha in Aśvaghoṣa's Buddha-carita[5] and such descriptions of women by Kālidāsa as that of Umā[6] make it abundantly clear that the epic model of feminine beauty continued to be accepted in the later era as well.

§ 6. The Rāmāyaṇa is less outspoken on the physical aspect of sex; the NW is unusually silent on this subject while the BE and the Uttarakāṇḍa record a few facts. A verse attributed to Jābāli—absent in the NW—discusses the birth of a child in biological terms: "the father is only the cause of a being *or* only the seed (*bījamātram*); his semen—his very blood—when conjoined with the mother, who is after her menstruation (*ṛtuman*) leads to the birth of a man."[7] The GE differs a little in stating that the semen with blood as its breath (*rudhiravāyunā*) combines with the menstrual discharge (*ṛtu*) of the mother.[8] It is apparent that the ovum was implied by the term *ṛtu*. The period after menstruation (*ṛtukāla*) was regarded as the most appropriate time for cohabitation implying that the ancient Indian resorted to sex consciously as a means of procreation and not merely for sensual pleasure. The husband, it is said, was obliged to cohabit with his wife who had bathed after her menses; the failure to do so is implied to have been sinful, for Bharata cursed that the person at whose approval Rāma was banished should incur the sin of such a husband.[9] The sexual intercourse during the period after menses was also called *ṛtu* and this is apparently meant in the statement that Rāma enjoyed with Sītā many a *ṛtu* (*vijahāra bahūn ṛtūn*)[10]. It is also interesting to note that the Uttarakāṇḍa in a mytholo-

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1 NW V, 10, 30; III, 51, 18.
2 NW VII, 32, 13; BE VI, 12, 15; GE III, 52, 33.
3 GE III, 52, 31.
4 Bharhut Tope: Plate XXIII.
5 Buddhacarita: IV, 29-40.
6 Kumārasambhava: I, 33-48.
7 BE II, 108, 11.
8 GE II, 116, 20.
9 BE II, 75, 52—Cf. Meyer: SL. pp. 223 f.; also p. 121.
10 BE I, 77, 25.

gical explanation of the phenomenon of menstruation represents it as the third part of Indra's sin of Brahman-murder which for three nights crush the pride of young women.[1] This association of menses with sin illustrates vividly the attitude of the ancient Indians in promulgating such social conventions as segregating women during menstruation.

§ 7. The epic includes a few observations on pregnancy; the cessation of menstruation or the fact of being without *ṛtukāla* (i.e. the period after menstruation) was stated in describing the state of pregnancy.[2] The period is given as nine months[3] although it is generally reckoned as ten months.[4] The longings peculiar to this period (i.e. *dohada*) are also mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa wherein Rāma addressed Sītā and said, "Vaidehi, the conception of a child has come upon you. What do you desire? Whatever wish of yours may be done." And Sītā chose to visit the forest hermitages.[5] An easy delivery was apparently a fervent wish of mothers and in the prosperous reign of Rāma women are said to have given birth to children without any illness (*arogaprasavā nāryo*)[6]. The destruction of the foetus was practised though denounced;[7] and as the story of Sagara indicates abortions were administered by rival wives.[8]

§ 8. The legends and mythical tales included in the Rāmāyaṇa mention a number of unnatural features in sexual life. It is said that the testicles (*vṛṣaṇau*) of Indra fell at the curse of Gautama;[9] this however, may be regarded as reminiscent of castration. An incident of change of sexes is also a theme of a story; Ila entered the forest wherein Śiva was sporting with Umā and was instantly changed into a woman.[10] The birth of Agastya from a pitcher into which Varuṇa had emitted his semen is interesting.[11] And so are the cases of unnatural pregnancy caused by words and curses.[12]

§ 9. The concept of love represented in the Rāmāyaṇa appears to be the same as that current in later Indian literature. The feeling of love had been conceived as a god, who was known as *Manmatha*, *Kāma*, *Anaṅga* and *Kandarpa*.[13] The anthropomorphism of this god was complete at the time of the later parts of epic and he is represented as armed with arrows.[14] The song of the cuckoo, music and the season of flowers, i.e. the spring, are said to inflame love[15] which is capable of distracting even a great sage from his religious practices.[16] By way of

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1 BE VII, 86, 15.
2 BE VII, 48, 19.
3 BE VII, 89, 23.
4 Meyer: SL II p. 371.
5 BE VII, 42, 31-35.
6 BE VII, 41, 19.
7 NW II, 65, 23; II, 78, 47; BE II, 74, 4.
8 BE I, 70, 37.
9 NW I, 44, 27.
10 BE VII, 87, 15-16.
11 BE VII, 57, 4.
12 NW V, 91, 48; BE VII, 2, 13-14. Cf. Meyer: SL I pp. 33 & 37.
13 NW III, 2, 11; BE VII, 26, 20; VII, 80, 6; IV, 1, 29; NW I, 60, 6.
14 BE VII, 26, 20.
15 NW I, 60, 6; BE IV, 1, 29; NW I, 60, 9-10.
16 NW I, 60, 11.

defining the sentiment of love Rāvaṇa told Sītā, "Affection and tenderness, it is said, develops for the person, with whom men fall in love (or, literally, on whom an agreeable desire is exercised by men)"[1]. This concept of love as something not merely a carnal passion is further emphasized in a statement in the Uttarakāṇḍa wherin Urvaśī tells Varuṇa, "It is certain that you are in my heart; my love (*bhāva?*) is greater for you though the body belongs to Mitra."[2] Similarly Sītā too explained to Rāma, "My heart which is in my control is placed in you; but what could I, being helpless, do as regards the body which is under another's control."[3] The fact that this attitude to love is coupled with a conscious negation of its gratification and with an expressed dissociation of it from physical satisfaction reveals that the ancient Indians had had a perfect understanding of the psychology of sex. Moreover, the sensual passion, is often criticized in the Rāmāyaṇa. Daśaratha was abused by his wives and sons as being overwhelemd by passion and intent on carnality.[4] Lakṣmaṇa blamed Sugrīva for indulgence in sensual pleasure which is called in the BE as vulgar (*grāmyeṣu bhogeṣu*)[5]. And Vibhīṣaṇa found fault with Rāvaṇa on the ground that the latter was foolish in seeking sensual pleasure for its own sake (*kāmaṃ kāmalābhārthaṃ*)[6].

§ 10. It is unfortunate that courtship as a manifestation of love finds scanty reference in the epic; there is really only one description of love-making between a couple who are in love with each other. But there are a number of interesting accounts of preludes to sexual gratification. They, no doubt, reveal an aspect of Indian life which is usually not clearly described in literature. Firstly, there is a tendency to be outspoken as regards the favour expected and, secondly, it is introduced quite suddenly without any prior acquaintance. The conversations between Viśvāmitra and Menakā,[7] Budha and Ilā[8] and Śakra and Ahalyā[9] give the impression that a stranger requested not her love but directly the gratification of his sexual urge. So did Daṇḍa propose to Arajā although he appears to know that his act was not justifiable, for he says that he does not mind whether his act leads to his being killed or incurs a terrible sin.[10] The advances made by Rāvaṇa to Rambhā may not be regarded as representing a regular occurrence; the low sentiments inserted in his statement may perhaps be for the purpose of depicting Rāvaṇa as a villain; he inquires from Rambhā, "Who shall be satisfied by the savour of your face which is of the fragrance of lotuses? With whose chest will these full-grown breasts of yours, charming like golden

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1 NW V, 17, 14.
2 BE VII, 56, 20.
3 NW VI, 97,9.
4 NW II, 25, 9 & 12; II, 34, 10; II, 53, 20; II, 50, 6; II, 81, 5.
5 NW IV, 27, 21; BE IV, 34, 15. Cf. also BE III, 33, 3.
6 NW V, 85, 6.
7 NW I, 59, 9-11.
8 BE VII, 89, 4-6.
9 NW I, 44, 18.
10 BE VII, 80, 14-15.

pitchers, come in contact? And who will mount (*adhyāroṣkyati*) your wide hips, which resemble a golden wheel?"[1] But it is interesting that Rāvaṇa after putting her these over-inquisitive — if not obscene — questions begs of her with clasped hands the favour of sexual intercourse.[2] These accounts occurring in legends and hence in specifically late portions of the Rāmāyaṇa imply an approach to sex which is purposely made to appear vile and corrupt.

§ 11. Somewhat different in the nature of the sentiments expressed is the statement of Rāvaṇa in wooing Sītā — which is contained in a genuine part of the epic. Here the crude call for mating is replaced by a more sober request worded in a tone of sincerity and affection. What he wanted of Sītā was mainly her love; for he asked her to honour him, love him, have faith in him and be his wife.[3] He prostrated himself before her touching her feet with his head and announced that he was a servant of hers to be commanded at will.[4] He further offered her all his belongings besides himself and begged of her to accept them.[5] Her beauty was emphasized as the cause for his ardent entreaty;[6] she was so pretty, he explained, that no man would fail to transgress bounds of propriety on meeting her[7] and that he had lost all interest in his wives.[8] He attempted to win her over by recounting his deeds of valour and comparing himself with Rāma who was clad in bark garments;[9] and besides adding a passing comment that youth was evanescent[10] he described to her ultimately the pleasures she would enjoy if she accepted him as her husband.[11] There is little doubt that these sentiments were those usually expressed by a man in wooing the hand of a woman.

§ 12. Happy pictures of courtship among lovers are not altogether lacking in the Rāmāyaṇa. The lovers were known to have gone by swift vehicles to forests with their lady-loves,[12] and lovers putting up their ladies with bland words is the subject of a simile.[13] The account of the love-making of Rāma and Sītā at Citrakūṭa is by far the most interesting. The romantic situation was created most dramatically by Rāma who described the forest and showed her a blossoming creeper clinging on to a mango tree; "it appears" said Rāma, "very much like your resorting to me." Enamoured at this comment she got onto Rāma's lap. Then Rāma rubbed his finger on a piece of red arsenic and marked a beautiful "*tilaka*" on her forehead; he applied some red ochre on her face and decorated her hair with "kesara" flowers; Sītā was

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1 BE VII, 26, 22-24.
2 BE VII, 26, 27.
3 NW V, 15, 3; 7, 16.
4 NW III, 61, 34; V, 15, 24.
5 NW V, 15, 17; 23; 32-33; 11; 35.
6 NW V, 15, 15; 19; 13.
7 NW V, 15, 14.
8 NW V, 15, 30.
9 NW V, 15,19-22; 25.
10 NW V, 15, 12.
11 NW V, 15, 36.
12 BE II, 67, 19.
13 NW V, 9, 43.

frightened by a monkey and instantly was her "*tilaka*" seen on Rāma's chest; they both enjoyed the fun. At Sītā's request they took a walk in a grove of Aśoka flowers and they returned both decked in flowers.[1] Decking with flowers and marking a *tilaka* have been important in Indian courtship, but kissing — not the kiss on the head but on the face and the lips — is not mentioned at all in the Rāmāyaṇa. The posture in which Rāma and Sītā were making love has been regarded in Indian art to be the conventional posture of love-making as is made clear by the paintings of Ajanta and the sculpture of "two lovers" in Isurumuniya Vihāra, Anurādhapura, Ceylon.

§ 13. The necessity of cohabiting with one's wife after her menses has been already mentioned (VI § 6). Sleeping of married couples with breasts pressed together and with arms in tight embrace has found occasional reference in the epic.[2] The mutual consent was reckoned as an essential factor in sexual gratification;[3] but the BE makes mention of a practice of enforcing a woman to yield to coitus; it is called "*kukkuṭavṛtta*" which is explained in the commentary with a reference to Vātsyāyana, who says "The anger of the hen towards the cock is a natural characteristic."[4] Abstinence from sexual intercourse appears to have been an essential feature of religious life; for instance Rāma and Sītā had to be restrained in sex while fasting on the eve of the consecration.[5] Besides the natural means of sexual gratification through cohabitation (*maithuna*)[6], perverted practices, too, appear to have been current as implied in the story of Varuṇa and Urvaśī, wherein Varuṇa who was refused coitus by Urvaśī emitted his semen into a pot saying, "I will have attained my desire; I do not wish for coitus."[7]

§ 14. The Rāmāyaṇa records a few instances of extra-marital sex gratification. *Firstly*, there were prostitutes; at Bharadvāja's hermitage each man in Bharata's army was supplied with five women.[8] In Laṅkā there were prostitutes (*Veśyayuvati*) whose bodies had teeth and nail marks (*nakhair dantaiśca vikṣatā*)[9]; these marks have been regarded as closely associated with sexual gratification in Indian Erotics. To seduce Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, Lomapāda employed prostitutes (*gaṇikā*) who were beautiful and well-versed in expedients; they tempted the young sage by embracing him and touching him with their breasts.[10] This account reveals that the courtesans had adopted a well-developed technique of tempting people and its currency in a later period is borne out by a vivid description found in the Buddhacarita.[11]

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1 NW II, 109, 14-32.
2 NW III, 35, 17; BE V, 10, 49; GE V, 14, 26.
3 Cf. NW V, 17, 44-45.
4 BE VI, 13, 4 & Commy.
5 NW II, 8, 4.
6 NW I, 33, 6-7; IV, 23, 18; BE VII, 56, 15; VII, 80, 16; VII, 26, 41.
7 BE VII, 56, 17-18.
8 NW II, 104, 55.
9 NW V, 9, 23.
10 NW I, 8, 35; 57-58; GE I, 9, 14ff.
11 Buddhacarita IV, 29-40.

§ 15. The prostitutes were also dancing girls and songstresses; they are called *kalājña*, well versed in Arts and knowers of the *daiśika* form of dancing.[1] Most probably in their capacity as dancers they took part in royal receptions and in the consecration ceremony of Rāma.[2] Their association with the royalty and the nobility was possible because of the special training they were given by way of preparing them for their vocation and also because of their artistic accomplishments.[3] They were not merely tolerated in ancient India but as the Buddhist and the Jain literatures also show they were considered to be indispensable for urban life.[4] Just as the Buddhist texts called them *nagaraśobhinī* (beautifiers of the city), the Rāmāyaṇa states that Ayodhyā was made beautiful by the prostitutes (*gaṇikāgaṇaśobhitām*)[5].

§ 16. The epic does not refer to any organization among the courtesans; the elaborate establishments described in the Buddhist and the Jain texts[6] might have been current though they find no place in the epic story. A reference which we had already indicated (V § 74) signifying immoral practices among actresses (*śailūṣī*) may give the impression that their husbands (*śailūṣa*) functioned as pimps. But the Rāmāyaṇa does not offer any definite data on this subject and the mention of *śailūṣas* with women[7] cannot be utilised to arrive at the conclusion of Dharma that *śailūṣas* (=dancing masters, according to her) "functioned as pimps in the case of the girls who took to prostitution."[8]

§ 17. Another form of extra-marital sexual gratification was adultery which according to Sītā was resorted to by women of low conduct through the delusion of youth and through association with bad relatives (*kubāndhava*)[9]; and the prevalence of adultery among relatives who probably had free access to one another is implied in the dubious note struck by Kausalyā in advising Sītā that she should be heedful especially as regards her brother-in-law, Lakṣmaṇa.[10] The attitude of the Rāmayaṇa is against adultery. In Ayodhyā where the conditions were ideal there was none attached to others' wives;[11] and Bharata in cursing the person at whose instigation Rāma was banished compared that person to a bewildered villain who abandons his legitimate wives and resorts to others' wives.[12] Rāvaṇa had been criticized for his adulterous intentions on Sītā and Rambhā. Sītā told him, "Adultery (*paradārḥā?*) leads him, who is dissatisfied with his wives, and fickle in his sense organs and who is with an undeveloped intellect, unto ruin.[13] Just as your own

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1 NW I, 8, 35; GE I, 9, 23.
2 NW II, 1, 40; VI, 108, 3; II, 16,12.
3 Cf. Chakladar: SLAI p. 198.
4 Cf. Mehta: PBI pp. 294-295; Jain: LIJC p. 166.
5 NW II, 52, 18.
6 Mehta: PBI p. 296; Jain LIJC pp. 164-165.
7 NW II, 94, 27.
8 Dharma: JIH XVII p. 24.
9 NW II, 42, 17.
10 NW II, 42 26.
11 BE I, 7, 15.
12 BE II, 75, 55.
13 NW V, 16, 9.

wives, those of others too should be protected by you; and comparing with yourself (i.e. the feelings of the other husbands with his own) may you take delight in your own wives."[1] Vibhīṣaṇa asked him, 'who praises adultery as a virtue (dharma)?"[2] So did Rambhā also state that it was contrary to the conduct of the good to put obstructions to a woman who had an appointment with another.[3]

§ 18. Not only was union with a man other than the husband viewed with disfavour, even his touch was regarded as leading to impurity. So did Sītā insist that she should not be touched by Rāvaṇa[4] and that she could not allow Hanumat to carry her across to Rāma.[5] "I shall not touch" said Sītā, "with my limbs a male other than Rāghava. And this is my firm resolution."[6] And this attitude of hers was duly praised by Hanumat.[7] The reaction of the husband to his wife being touched by another is interesting to observe. Rāma told Lakṣmaṇa when Virādha caught Sītā that her being touched by another gave him greater sorrow than losing his father and being banished from his kingdom.[8] Rāma's argument for rejecting Sītā after killing Rāvaṇa was that she was polluted by the contact with Rāvaṇa's hip and that she was looked at by him with lustful eyes.[9] And Rāma persisted in accusing her even when she explained that Rāvaṇa's touch had given her no sensual thrill.[10] The people also expressed similar feelings when they talked ill of Sītā, "How could he (i.e. Rāma) enjoy in his heart the joy of cohabiting with Sītā, who had been previously carried away by force on Rāvaṇa's hip."[11]

§ 19. A woman whose character had been open to doubt was in a very bad plight. Rāma accused Sītā for living in another's home and being in a state wherein her purity could be questioned.[12] "Which man", asked Rāma from Sītā, "born of a noble family, being majestic, accepts with a friendly mind a woman who had lived in another's house?[13] For being soft towards Varuṇa, Urvaśī was cursed by Mitra to go down to the human world.[14] A special argument of the people against Rāma accepting Sītā was that they too would have to follow the king and be tolerant of their wives.[15] These instances, especially the last, show beyond doubt that the men were harsh on adulterous wives; it might have been simply the result of man's sexual jealousy. But it is interesting how the natural outcome of a feeling has led to legal and religious representation; the Mahābhārata has a verse which says that "the man who enjoys

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1 NW V, 16,8.
2 NW V, 85, 8.
3 BE VII, 26, 37.
4 BE III, 56, 19.
5 NW V, 34, 72-73.
6 NW V, 37, 3.
7 NW V, 35, 6.
8 BE III, 2, 21.
9 NW VI, 96, 22.
10 NW VI, 97, 8.
11 BE VII, 43, 17.
12 NW VI, 96, 19; 26.
13 NW VI, 96, 21.
14 BE VII, 56, 23-24.
15 BE VII, 43, 19.

a woman that has already been enjoyed by another belongs to the abominable whose lot in the world beyond is a dreadful one."[1]

§ 20. Yet the Rākṣasas regarded adultery along with abduction as their special duty.[2] A particularly interesting case of adultery is the one committed by Pavana on Añjanā; Pavana who assured Añjanā that his intention was not to do harm to her, begot a child and assured her that she would incur no offence in having cohabited with him.[3] Hanumat, the son of this union, seems to have considered it quite in keeping with the general standard of decorum, or perhaps he was proud of it. This appears to involve an aspect of the institution of marriage in ancient India and hence will be referred to in the relevant section (VI, § 40).

§ 21. As already observed abductions were a frequent feature among the Rākṣasas. Rāvaṇa is attributed with the abduction of many women[4] and that of Sītā is the central theme of the Rāmāyaṇa. But there seems to have been certain conventions about the rape of women so abducted. It is said that Rāvaṇa did not desire to cohabit with women who were not willing.[5] And he not only gave Sītā one year's time to make up her mind but assured her that she would not be touched unless she was willing.[6] The granting of a period of one year was probably meant to give an opportunity for the woman's husband or the relatives to rescue her as is implied by a statement of Sītā in the GE, "None lives after abducting the wife of a hero."[7] Vaidya shows that according to the Mahābhārata this allowance is a characteristic of the Rākṣasa form of marriage.[8] It appears that the abductor made use of his friends or attendants to inspire confidence in him and thus ensure the woman's submission.[9] The attitude to abduction was similar to that towards adultery. Mārīca and Jaṭāyu told Rāvaṇa that it was improper to carry away Sītā.[10] So did Vibhīṣaṇa state that the abduction of another's wife was not justifiable.[11] And Rāma himself criticized Rāvaṇa, "Stealing away helpless women and doing thereby an abominable act, you consider yourself a hero."[12]

§ 22. The legends included in the Rāmāyaṇa speak of some cases of rape as well. It was no doubt regarded criminal and the offenders were usually cursed. Daṇḍa was cursed by Arajā's father for seducing her without seeking her hand in marriage as was advised by her.[13] So was Rāvaṇa cursed by Pitāmaha for raping Puñjikasthā.[14] It was regarded

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1 Meyer: SL I p. 44.
2 NW V, 15, 5.
3 NW IV, 57, 16; IV, 58, 32-34.
4 NW V, 5, 5; V, 78, 10; BE VII, 24, 1-2; 20; VII, 25, 19.
5 BE VII, 26, 59.
6 NW V, 15, 6.
7 GE V, 36, 17.
8 Vaidya: RRV p. 174.
9 NW V, 19, 36; GE V, 25, 52.
10 NW III, 45, 3; III, 55, 5; 8.
11 NW V, 100, 38.
12 NW VI, 85, 14.
13 BE VII, 80, 9ff.
14 BE VI, 13, 11-14.

as immoral and Kuśanābha's daughters complained about Vāyu's attempt to rape them as transgressing the boundary of Dharma (*dharmamaryāda*)[1]. Similarly outraging the modesty of a woman was apparently a serious offence; in the single reference to such a case Vedavatī, when held by her hair by Rāvaṇa cut off her hair and committed suicide by entering the fire.[2]

§ 23. The data on the subject of sex offered by the Rāmāyaṇa are no doubt important in assessing the attitude of the ancient Indians to sex. Theirs was a healthy one as far as the material of the epic indicates. There had been a fair understanding of the aesthetic, the psychological and the physical aspects of sex. While the significance of a healthy sexual life was not lost sight of, debauchery and indecent practices were condemned outright. The data in the Rāmāyaṇa—though scanty—show that there was a high ideal of sexual purity, although in society the vices continued to exist.

B. The Institution of Marriage

§ 24. The high standard of sexual purity reflected in the Rāmāyaṇa naturally emphasizes the significance of marriage. As Meyer observes, with reference to a verse in the epic,[3] it was regarded as the "sacramental birth anew of the woman."[4] According to the Mahābhārata and the later Dharmaśāstras eight types of marriage were recognized, viz. Brāhma, Daiva, Ārṣa, Prājāpatya, Āsura, Gāndharva, Rākṣasa and Paiśāca.[5] Although the Rāmāyaṇa makes no mention of these, five of them, according to P. C. Dharma,[6] are represented in it. The marriage between Rāma and Sītā belongs to the Prājāpatya type because the bridegroom had no payments to be made to the bride's family.[7] But it is possible for one to argue that this wedlock could be regarded as of the Āsura type for there was a *Śulka* fixed for Sītā although it was only an abstract quality, viz. valour (Cf. Sītā as *vīryaśulkā*)[8]. The definite instance of the Āsura type was the marriage of Kaikeyī with Daśaratha who promised her mother that Kaikeyī's son would be appointed the successor; here the Kingdom was the payment (*rājyaśulka*) for the bride.[9] The offer of Śūrpaṇakhā suggests the possibility of the Gāndharva[10] wedlock, while marriage by abduction had been already shown as the type, *par excellence*, among the Rākṣasas,[11] (VI, §§ 20f).

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1 NW I, 30, 25.
2 BE VII, 17, 27-29.
3 NW V, 14, 10.
4 Meyer: SL I p. 54.
5 Meyer: SL I p. 55 (The Mahābhārata, however, mentions only six); Manusmṛti: III, 21ff.
6 Dharma: JIH XVII p. 5.
7 NW I, 69, 19 ff.
8 NW I, 64, 7.
9 GE II, 116, 3; BE II, 107, 3 (not NW).
10 NW III, 22, 21 ff.
11 BE VII, 24, 1; VII, 25, 40.

§ 25. The legends of the Rāmāyaṇa give a number of instances of the *Brāhma* form of wedlock; the marriages of Kuśanābha's daughters to Brahmadatta,[1] of Tṛṇabindu's daughter to Pulastya[2] and of Bharadvāja's daughter to Viśṛavas[3] come within this type because the fathers handed over the brides without receiving anything in return. Besides these five types which have been already observed, there was prevalent also the *Daiva* form as is implied in the wedding of Śāntā with Ṛṣyaśṛṅga; although the bride was not given officially as the fee for a sacrifice performed there is little doubt that she was wedded to him so as to show Lomapāda's gratitude to Ṛṣyaśṛṅga, who through his magical presence brought rain to his drought-stricken kingdom.[4]

§ 26. It is not possible to determine which of these could have been the more frequent form. However it is clear that the Gāndharva type was not favoured even where the opportunities existed for it (Cf. Kuśanābha's daughters and Arajā), while the Rākṣasa form was condemned especially if the woman was already married (VI, § 21) for it would then be adultery.

§ 27. It was essential, it appears, for an ideal wedlock that the bridegroom and the bride should have been of equal status and equal caste.[5] And the custom of recounting the pedigree of the couple seems to have been meant to ensure that they belonged to the same caste and that they maintained the same social status.[6] Still there had been instances of intermarriage among castes (IV § 16) although it normally was allowed only in the case of a man of a higher caste marrying from a lower caste. While the Rāmāyaṇa is silent on the advantages or otherwise of such marriages, it frowns upon incestuous relations; Rāma in accusing Vālin said that the wife of the younger brother should not be married as it was contrary to the *Dharma*[7] and also that capital punishment was to be meted out to the person who has lustful relations with his own sister or the younger brother's wife.[8] To this Aṅgada added that the marriage of the wife of the elder brother was as incestuous as marrying one's own mother.[9]

§ 28. The regular form of choosing a bridegroom for a girl in the Rāmāyaṇa appears to have been the old practice of "self-choice" or *svayaṃvara;* it is generally regarded as a special right of the Kṣatriya caste. As observed by Hopkins[10] there were two distinct types of *svayaṃvara:* firstly there was the older, primitive self-choice where a bride chose a groom among a number of eligible young men invited

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1 NW I, 30, 45 ff.
2 BE VII, 2, 24 ff.
3 BE VII, 3, 3.
4 NW I, 8, 72 ff.
5 NW I, 66, 34; I, 68, 3; VI, 8, 21.
6 Cf. NW I, 66, 35.
7 NW IV, 14, 13-14.
8 BE IV. 18, 22-23.
9 NW IV, 47, 4.
10 Hopkins: JAOS XIII pp. 168 f. & p. 357. Cf. Meyer: SL I. p. 78.

by her father for it. A well-known example of this type is the self-choice of Damayantī in the Nalopākhyāna of the Mahābhārata. In the Rāmāyaṇa the choice of Śūlin by Somapā with the words "*svayaṃ ca varaye vāham*"[1] and the statement of Kuśanābha's daughters to Vāyu that they would choose a *svayaṃvara*[2] are indicative of the simple ceremony of self-choice. Secondly, the *svayaṃvara* had taken a "splendid knightly" form and was for all intents and purposes a contest of valour. The *svayaṃvara* of Sītā involved the manipulation of the great bow, wherein Rāma succeeded.[3] In a similar manner did Draupadī the heroine of the Mahābhārata obtain the five Pāṇḍava brothers as her husbands. As already shown (VI § 24) the Rāmāyaṇa itself regards this form of self-choice as an instance of paying for the bride (Cf. *vīryaśulka*).

§ 29. If in the first type of *svayaṃvara* the parents of the bride could exercise their influence in inviting only those whom they liked for the ceremony, the girl still had perfect freedom to choose among them the one she liked. The latter form restricted her freedom much more as she had to abide by the result of the contest. But as the Mahābhārata reveals the bride could exclude those whom she disliked from the contest as Draupadī did in the case of Karṇa.[4] The development of the second type of *svayaṃvara* seems to indicate that the women were losing the freedom of action they once exercised in the choice of their partners; or else it is also possible that the women themselves preferred great warriors as their husbands as probably was the norm in what Sidhanta calls the Heroic Age of India so that arrangements were made to select the most valorous of the suitors. Moreover, political intentions may also be attributed to it. At a time when the individual warrior was more important for the preservation of a balance of power among the numerous petty states of northern India marriage was often resorted to so as to secure the alliance of a strong warrior[5] and as such the *svayaṃvara* involving a contest of skill was the means of acquiring great soldiers to one's family.

§ 30. Whatever had been the original purpose of the *svayaṃvara*, the parents, especially the father, figure most prominently in the choice of a bridegroom for their daughter; they were also responsible for the marriage of their sons. It was Janaka who offered Sītā to Rāma and before the marriage was finalized the consent of Rāma's father was necessary;[6] and so was Sītā called *pitṛkṛtā* (made by the father) wife of Rāma.[7] When the children are grown-up the father is said to think of their marriage.[8] And while Bharadvāja offered his daughter to

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1 NW I, 30, 42.
2 NW I, 30, 19. Cf. BE I, 32, 21.
3 NW III, 2, 26-30; I, 63, 22-26.
4 Sidhanta: HAI p. 151.
5 Cf. *loc. cit.*, p. 187.
6 NW I, 63, 22-26; I, 64, 10f.
7 BE I, 77, 26.
8 NW III, 2, 22, BE VII, 4, 19; I, 18, 37-38.

Viśravas,[1] Vidyutkeśa received Sandhyā's daughter on behalf of his son.[2] The suitors generally asked the fathers for their daughters' hands.[3] And, likewise, the girls directed their lovers to their fathers for approval as did Kuśanābha's daughters[4] and Arajā.[5] In the event of the death of parents the brothers seem to have taken their place in the choice of husbands for their sisters.[6] It is important to note that the mother had been nowhere consulted as regards the marriage of either sons or daughters as far as the data of the Rāmāyaṇa go. Further, it is interesting to observe that Vibhāṇḍaka came to know of his son's, i.e. Ṛṣyaśṛṅga's, marriage with Śāntā much later.[7]

§ 31. The age at which marriage was normally entered into is an important problem in the study of the institution of marriage in ancient India. The Rāmāyaṇa states that the father thought of the marriage of their children at a particular age which is vaguely called the age suitable for marriage;[8] youth (*yauvana*) is sometimes associated with this age.[9] What this particular age was is difficult to be determined. The marriage of Rāma and Sītā is apparently a case of child-marriage. Sītā is stated to have told Rāvaṇa that she was banished with Rāma after they spent twelve years in the house of their father-in-law when she was eighteen years of age and Rāma was twenty-seven.[10] As her coming to live in Daśaratha's house was immediately after her wedding the age at which she was married was six, and Rāma then was fifteen. If on the other hand the age of Rāma at the time of his exile was twenty-five as is recorded in the BE[11] his age at the time of his wedding was thirteen. These as pointed out in the Commentary (Tilaka) of Rāma are in perfect agreement with Daśaratha's refusal to send away Rāma with Viśvāmitra because he was less than sixteen years of age.[12] There are, moreover, other references which indicate that theirs was a child-marriage; Sītā told Rāma that he had taken her as his beloved "child-wife" (*kaumārīṃ.....bhāryām*)[13] and again wailed that she came to Rāma who was a child as a child (*bālāṃ bālasya samprāptām*)[14]. The data regarding the only marriage which comes within the theme of the epic are sufficient to disprove P. C. Dharma's conclusion that "post-puberty marriage was the rule of the day"[15]. She, herself, finds it difficult to reconcile her conclusion with Daśaratha's statement that Rāma was under sixteen and attempts a far-fetched explanation that the statement of Daśaratha was "due to his unwillingness to part with Rāma!"[16]

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1 BE VII, 3, 3.
2 BE VII, 4, 20.
3 BE VII. 17,11.
4 NW I, 30, 18-20; 26.
5 BE VII, 80, 11.
6 BE VII, 12, 1; VII, 25, 28-29.
7 NW I, 13, 25.
8 NW I, 30, 32; III, 2, 22; BE VII, 9, 8; BE I, 18, 37-38.
9 BE VII, 4, 19; VII, 9, 8.
10 NW III, 52, 4-5 & 9.
11 BE III, 47, 10.
12 Cf. Commy. on BE III, 47, 10.
13 NW II, 33, 8.
14 NW VI, 8, 21.
15 Dharma: JIH XVII p. 3.
16 *loc cit*., p. 4 fn.

§ 32. C. V. Vaidya and C. Bulcke also appear to have rejected the possibility of a child marriage in this case; but their argument is based on the variation in reading of a verse in the three recensions. Apparently taking the reading of the BE i.e. *remire muditās sarvā bhartṛbhiḥ sahitā rahaḥ*[1] (they all i.e. Sītā and her sisters, sported happily with their husbands in private) as more authentic than that of the northern recensions, namely "*remire muditās tatra bhartṛpiyahite ratāḥ*[2] (they sported happily being attached to the welfare of their husbands), they conclude that the version of the northern recensions has been done "in deference to the later prevailing custom of child-marriage."[3] This argument loses its cogency when it is observed that it takes for granted that the reading of the NW and the GE are later than that of the BE. The evidence is too flimsy to uphold one reading in preference to another. And if we go by a statistical method the version contained in two has naturally to be reckoned more important than that held by one recension only. Further, the omission of *rahaḥ* (in private) does not necessarily imply a conscious attempt to signify the incapacity of the new couples to have sexual relations; "*remire*" should rather have been changed than "*rahaḥ*". As such this could not be regarded as a proof against the prevalence of child-marriages at the period reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa.

§ 33. The Mahābhārata also refers to cases of child-marriages; to Yudhiṣṭhira is attributed the statement, "Let a man of thirty years wed a ten-year-old wife, a *nagnikā* (one that has not yet menstruated) or let the man of twenty-one get one seven years old."[4] The marriage of Uttarā appears to be an instance of child-marriage,[5] although Meyer criticizes Hopkins for concluding so on the grounds that she was playing with dolls.[6] The later law-books are, however, very strict that the girls should be given in marriage very young; the ideal seems to have been that the girl should not pass a single period of menstruation (not even the first) without a husband.[7]

§ 34. The legends included in the Rāmāyaṇa give us a different picture. The daughters of Kuśanābha were no doubt grown-up for Vāyu to think of raping them.[8] Kaikasī was fast losing her youth when her father Sumālin directed her to Viśravas.[9] And as Dharma explains,[10] the fact that the girls who disturbed Pulastya realized the gravity of his curse that they should become pregnant, evinces that there were girls who had attained puberty but were not married.[11] Do these legends represent a period prior to that reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa stage?

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1 BE I, 77, 14.
2 NW I, 72, 12; GE I, 78, 12.
3 Bulcke: JOR XVII p. 6.
4 Meyer: SL I p. 58.
5 Sidhanta: HAI p. 149.
6 Meyer: SL I. p. 9 fn.
7 Cf. Meyer: SL I p. 54 fn. and p. 55 fn.
8 NW I, 30.
9 BE VII, 9, 8-12.
10 Dharma: JIH XVII p. 3; Dharma: JIH XXVII p. 71.
11 BE VII, 2, 12-18.

And does the Rāmāyaṇa story reflect the beginnings of the custom of child-marriage? A chronological difference is all that is possible to be postulated by way of explaining this situation. A geographical distinction is not at all warranted because of the prevalence of both types of child-marriage and post-puberty marriage in both the east and the west as reflected by the two epics and the other literary works. A sober view would be to regard both these as existing side by side at the same place during the same period.

§ 35. There are, according to the Rāmāyaṇa, no prescribed ages for the bride and bridegroom. Rāma was older than Sītā by nine or seven years. It[1] is likely that the bridegroom was generally older than the bride. It was not unusual for a young girl to marry an old man and the marriage of Kaikeyī to Daśaratha has been called as one between a young girl (*taruṇī*) and an old man (*vṛddha*)[1].

§ 36. The practice of purchasing a bride has been already discussed (VI, § 24). The *śulka* which had to be paid was not always something abstract as in the case of Sītā; but as is evident from a statement of Rāma the father of the bride had to be paid by kind. He told Sītā, "I shall conquer the whole earth, full of various cities, and offer it to Janaka for your sake."[2] The Rāmāyaṇa does not provide any references to the prevalence of the institution of dowry as a *sine qua non* for a marriage, as is generally the custom in India today. But we are told that Janaka gave as *kanyādhana* woollen, cotton and silk garments, gems, vehicles, ornaments, 400,000 heads of cattle, a four-fold army and a thousand slaves with golden necklaces.[3] Dharma argues that these were "presents given to the brides when departing for the husbands' house."[4] Whatever it was it appears to have been the dowry given to the daughter by her father and hence it may not be quite accurate to deny an institution, whose existence in ancient India-though sporadically—is proved by other literary sources,[5] merely because the Rāmāyaṇa is not specific in its citation.

§ 37. Polygamy seems to have been the rule in ancient India. Daśaratha had a harem of three hundred and fifty women[6] with Kausalyā, Kaikeyī and Sumitrā as his chief consorts. Rāvaṇa had many wives and he was still anxious to have Sītā also.[7] Bharata offered Hanumat no less than sixteen wives.[8] While Brahmadatta is said to have married the hundred daughters of Kuśanābha,[9] Sudeva had two wives.[10] Although the data in the Rāmāyaṇa speak more of the harems

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1 NW II, 13, 3.
2 NW V, 15, 18.
3 NW I, 70, 3-7.
4 Dharma: JIH XVII p. 7.
5 Cf. Mehta: PBI p. 281; Jain: LIJC p. 157.
6 NW II, 38, 10.
7 NW III, 52, 25.
8 NW VI, 106, 52.
9 NW I, 30, 47-48.
10 BE VII, 78, 4.

of Kṣatriya kings and princes, they do not warrant Dharma's assumption that "amongst Brahmans, polygamy though certainly permitted, was probably practised only by a few."[1] Firstly, it has never been a monopoly of the kings and the nobles.[2] Secondly, there does not seem to have existed any disapproval of this institution among the Brahmans. And if as Dharma conjectures the polygamous Brahmans were few in number it was probably because they were not rich enough to afford many wives. The Vedic literature has a number of references to Brahmans with more than one wife, and in the Rāmāyaṇa we hear of Viśravas who accepted as his wives the daughters of Bharadvāja and Sumālin.[3]

§ 38. The harems of kings had been no doubt very unpleasant places and as the Uttarakāṇḍa describes them in a simile women were closed up (*rurodha*) in them causing them much suffering.[4] The co-wives (*sapatnī*) treated one another disrespectfully and Kausalyā complained to Rāma how she was ridiculed and insulted by her rivals,[5] stating that it was impossible for her to live with them.[6] The hatred among co-wives seems to have been proverbial; Mantharā was surprised to find that Kaikeyī had no resentment towards Kausalyā when they were co-wives, (*rāmamātā sapatnī te kathaṃ vairaṃ na yātayet?*)[7]. A manifestation of the jealousy among co-wives is the instance where Sagara's mother was given some poison to induce an abortion by her rival.[8] Rāma attempted to convince Śūrpaṇakhā that living as co-wives was full of suffering (*suduḥkhāya sapatnatā*)[9]. A special favour that a wife appears to have asked her husband is that she should be made free of rivals (*niḥsapatnāṃ*)[10], which was probably accomplished by giving her an important position among his wives or, as Daśaratha did, by conferring a special boon to her such as choosing her son as his successor. The provision made for the ventilation of the grievances of co-wives is no doubt interesting; there were rooms called "*krodhāgāra*" to which the offended wife retired and wept till her grievances were redressed.[11] According to C. Bader these chambers of anger are still maintained in Indian houses.[12]

§ 39. The jealousy among co-wives was, no doubt, looked upon by men as base and the ideal relationship between them, as expounded by Rāma, was to be one of sisterly affection.[13] Though Rāma did not actually criticize the institution of polygamy, the popular belief among the Hindus is that Rāma was strictly monogamous. The episode in the Uttarakāṇḍa about the Aśvamedha sacrifice of Rāma is generally pro-

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1 Dharma: JIH XVII p. 8.
2 Cf. Kane. HDK II p. 551.
3 BE VII, 3, 3; BE VII, 9, 8-12.
4 BE VII, 35, 56.
5 NW II, 25, 6-7.
6 NW II, 27, 4.
7 NW II, 10, 31.
8 BE I, 70, 31 & 37.
9 NW III, 23, 2.
10 NW II, 15, 25.
11 NW II, 11, 18.
12 Bader: WAI p. 99 fn.
13 NW II, 26, 15.

ferred as evidence that Rāma had no wife other than Sītā and hence he had to have Sītā's image to represent her;[1] even Bhavabhūti has vouched for the belief of the Hindus on this ground.[2] C. V. Vaidya,[3] however, argues that Rāma had many wives on the evidence of BE II,8,12 which states that the best women (*paramāḥ striyaḥ*) of Rāma will be happy. The NW controverts this and states that Rāma's wife (*rāmapatnī*) will be happy.[4] As such it may be noted that the epic in delineating the character of Rāma as that of the ideal husband conceived him as monogamous, which probably was only the ideal while in practice the kings of ancient India were polygamous.

§ 40. Polyandry which is mentioned in the Mahābhārata finds no reference in the Rāmāyaṇa. The ideal of a woman having only one husband (*ekapatnī*)[5] excludes the possibility of the existence of this institution. Nor is the practise of levirate as found in the great epic mentioned in this. But the birth of Hanumat may imply that the levirate was current. He is called the natural son (*aurasa*) of Māruta (= *Pavana*) but the *kṣetraja* son of Keśarin, the legitimate husband of Añjanā.[6] According to the Indian legal system the *kṣetraja* son is one begotten by proxy according to the practice of *Niyoga* (levirate).[7] It has already been observed how Pavana convinced Añjanā that her union with him was not adulterous (VI § 20), which indicates that he was permitted by Keśarin to get a son for him. Assuming that Keśarin was alive—the epic does not suggest the contrary—this case of levirate is to be regarded as one where the husband seeks another's assistance as he himself is not capable of procreation! This, however, is purely conjectural, but the familiarity of the Rāmāyaṇa with the levirate is clear.

§ 41. The Rāmāyaṇa offers us only a very scanty account of the ceremonies which accompanied the wedding. Weddings were celebrated in splendour as they are mentioned as pleasing people (*janaharṣaṇāḥ*)[8] The ceremonies which preceded the actual marriage rites were the *godānamaṅgala*, when the side-locks (*kākapakṣa*) of the bridegroom were cut (and, as the term signifies, offerings of cattle were probably made to the Brahmans) and the *śrāddha* ceremony for the Pitṛs.[9] The genealogies of the two families were recounted and the officiating priest asked for the bride on behalf of the bridegroom; in the event of the wedding of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa Vasiṣṭha addressed Janaka and said," For the sake of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa of exemplary conduct, born to a family far-famed as the ocean I choose (*varayāmi*) your two daughters."[10] The

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1 BE VII, 99, 7.
2 Cf. Uttararāmacarita II, Śuddhaviṣkambha.
3 Vaidya: RRV p. 15.
4 NW II, 10,6.
5 NW V, 22, 13. Cf. VI, 69, 32.
6 NW IV, 57, 18; V, 30,20.
7 Chinna Durai: *Hindu Law* p. 17.
8 NW II, 73, 15.
9 NW I, 67, 22.
10 NW I, 66, 33.

important part of the ceremony was the taking of hands by the couple in the presence of the holy fire;[1] marriage is called the "giving of the hand" (*pāṇipradāna*)[2] and "the holding of hands in the presence of the fire and the elders."[3] The climax of the ritual was the pouring of water by the bride's father over the hands of the couple.[4] The BE gives a clearer account of the rites followed in the marriage of Rāma and Sītā. According to it an altar was built by Viśvāmitra and Śatānanda in the middle of the sacrificial hall and it was decorated in every possible manner. To the accompaniment of rites and hymns (*vidhimantrapuraskṛtam*) fire was placed in the altar and oblations were made to it by Vasiṣṭha. After which Sītā who was decked in all ornaments was brought to the fire and was made to stand opposite Rāma. Then Janaka told Rāma, "This my daughter shall be your lawful companion (*sahadharamcarī*); desire her and take her hand with yours. The fortunate one, devoted to her husband shall follow him for ever like the shadow." Having said so he poured the water which had been purified with hymns.[5] Finally they circumambulated the holy fire and also the king.[6] The rites described in the epic are simpler than those enjoined in the Vedic texts[7] and the Sūtras.[8] But it is interesting to observe that the basic rites described in the Rāmāyaṇa are still current in India among the orthodox Hindus.

§ 42. From the data offered by the Rāmāyaṇa we observe that no dissolution of a marriage, as understood today by divorce, was possible in ancient India. But the husband had the right to abandon his wife for various reasons and as P. V. Kane argues this cannot be regarded the same as divorcing.[9] Women, especially the immoral ones who were rejected by their husbands are mentioned in the epic.[10] While Daśaratha abandoned Kaikeyī on the grounds that she had forsaken Dharma (*tyaktadharma*)[11], Rāma insisted that Sītā should go wherever she wanted because her character was liable to be suspected[12] and later according to the Uttarakāṇḍa he actually banished her to the forest.[13] These reveal that the husband was in a position to get rid of his wife; but the wife was not able to desert her husband. The social conventions seem to have been strict on her and Rāma, himself, who had no scruples to reject his wife on sheer suspicion, advised his mother, "In no way is the abandonment of one's husband enjoined; it is despicable and should not be done by you even in your thoughts" (*bhartuś caiva parityāgaḥ śāsyati na kathaṃ cana, sa bhavatyā na kartavyo manasāpi vigarhitaḥ*)[14]. What became of the wives who were driven away is not known for certain;

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1 NW I, 30, 47; II, 45, 8; BE VII, 12, 19-20.
2 NW II, 42, 14.
3 NW III, 1, 68.
4 NW III, 3, 18; BE II, 29, 18.
5 BE I, 73, 20-28.
6 BE I, 73, 35.
7 Cf. RgVeda X, 85.
8 Cf. Kane: HDK II pp. 527-531.
9 Kane: HDK II p. 620.
10 NW II, 97, 4; BE II, 66, 24.
11 NW II, 45, 6-7.
12 NW VI, 96, 20.
13 BE VII, 45, 17 ff.
14 NW II, 28, 11.

it is likely that some of them, as indicated in the Uttarakāṇḍa, found refuge in the hermitages, which were sanctuaries for all. They could also remarry for Rāma told Sītā that she could choose anyone whom she wanted.[1]

§ 43. To the Indian wife widowhood has been a dreaded state; in the Rāmāyaṇa Kausalyā, Tārā, Sītā and Kumbhīnasī describe it as infamous, despicable, pitiable and disastrous.[2] The death of the husband is said to be the first death of the wife.[3] The horror expressed by women as regards widowhood seems to have been not so much a result of the helplessness experienced by a widow but of the odium attached to widowhood in society; for instance, Tārā wailed, "The woman who has lost her husband—let her be with sons—is still called 'a widow' by the people although she has immense wealth and corn."[4]

§ 44. Two further problems involving widowhood are remarriage and the *suttee*. P. C. Dharma argues that "there is no mention of widow remarriage in the Rāmāyaṇa."[5] And about Tārā who became the wife of Sugrīva after Vālin's death she says, "This is neither an instance of widow remarriage nor of polyandry as some critics make out as Sugrīva did not marry but simply appropriated her."[6] The question does not implicate the technical definition of marriage; we are satisfied that Tārā who was a widow consented to have a second husband. This was not an instance of levirate as Vālin already had a son and heir in Aṅgada. This is, therefore, to be regarded as an instance of remarriage. A further indication of the possibility of a widow remarriage is contained in the harsh words of Sītā to Lakṣmaṇa, where she refers to her position if Rāma were to die.[7] Unlike the Mahābhārata[8] the Rāmāyaṇa expresses no objection to the remarriage of widows. According to Mehta the Jātaka evidence seems to point out that it was allowed and that there was nothing abominable in it.[9] The Arthaśāstra enjoins that a woman whose husband is dead should go to the brother of her husband (*patisodaryaṃ*)[10]. And so does Nāradasmṛti allow a widow to remarry.[11] As such the remarriage of widows in ancient India was a well established fact, and hence we may have no hesitation in interpreting the two references to it in the Rāmāyaṇa as depicting an institution which was current at the period reflected by it.

§ 45. Whether the custom of *suttee* existed at the time depicted by the Rāmāyaṇa has been a vexed question. Lassen was of opinion that the Rāmāyaṇa lacked any references to widow-burning.[12] Hopkins

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1 NW VI, 96, 24 ff.
2 NW II, 72, 19; IV, 16, 18; VI, 8, 9; BE VII, 25 43.
3 NW VI, 8, 9.
4 NW IV, 17, 17.
5 Dharma: JIH XVII p. 28.
6 Dharma: *loc. cit.*
7 NW III, 50, 25.
8 Cf. Sidhanta: HAI p. 167.
9 Mehta: PBI p. 298.
10 Shama Sastri: AK p. 159.
11 Nāradasmṛti: XII, 97.
12 Lassen: IAL I p. 592.

argues that this observation of Lassen is not quite correct. He says, "the mention in the Rāmāyaṇa of a woman 'adorned and wanting to die and obtain final happiness' and the heroine's own remark[1] that she is not *satī* (the technical word denoting a woman willing to undergo *suttee*) shows the custom known here although not taking place in the case of the chief characters."[2] Hopkins reviewing the same subject eleven years later arrives at a different conclusion. Observing that the verse in the BE,[3] which gives the clearest reference to the prevalence of *suttee*, has been replaced in the GE with a much expanded passage and noticing also that the *suttee* is not performed in the epic he surmises that "it was a conventional lament inserted after the completion of the first poem as may be the case also with the actual *suttee* recorded in the first book of the other epic."[4] But the "*suttee* sentiment" finds occasional expression in the epic and these may perhaps be later accretions.[5]

§ 46. The NW, .oo, has a long passage on the practice of *suttee*, attributed to Kausalyā. Here she extols the duty of following one's husband by immolating herself in the funeral pyre but at the same time says that she would not do so because she was anxious to see Rāma again.[6] Once again she is said to have been prevented by Vasiṣṭha (*varayāmāsa tāṃ satīm*)[7]. This passage is peculiar to the Northern Recensions and it is probable as Hopkins thought, that it was interpolated. However, the *suttee* was known to the later parts of the Rāmāyaṇa and the only case of actual widow-burning occurs in a legend in the Uttara-kāṇḍa.[8]

C. The Wife and the Husband

§ 47. The Rāmāyaṇa upholds affection between the wife and the husband as the substratum of marriage. A wife is described as loving, intent on the welfare of and constantly devoted to the beloved.[9] To Rāma Sītā was like his shadow;[10] she was his life-long companion (*prāṇasahāyā*)[11] and as Nārada and Mārīca observed he loved her much more than his own life.[12] Sītā is described as being decked with her love for the husband although she had no ornaments.[13] And Rāma is so happy on seeing his wife that he says, "*Sādhu*! *Sādhu*!!"[14] Moreover, when Sītā was banished he had her statue as his companion in sacrifices.[15] Similarly was Daśaratha fond of his young wife, Kaikeyī, whom he loved

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1 i.e. NW V, 20, 27.
2 Hopkins: JAOS XIII p. 173.
3 BE II, 66, 12.
4 Hopkins: JAOS XXI p. 149.
5 Hopkins: *loc. cit.*, p. 145 fn.
6 NW II, 72, 33-36.
7 NW II, 72, 44.
8 BE VII, 17, 14.
9 NW II, 13, 26.
10 NW II, 42, 31.
11 BE III, 58, 4.
12 BE I, 1, 26, III, 37, 19.
13 NW V, 12, 21.
14 BE VII, 42, 30.
15 BE VII, 99, 7.

more than his life.[1] Sītā's adamant wish to accompany Rāma to the forest despite the discomforts and dangers is another proof of the sincere affection the wife had for her husband. She told Kausalyā that from the day of her wedding her sole vow (*vrata*) had been to abandon even her life for the happiness of the husband.[2] As such the thought of separation was unbearable to her and she desired to commit suicide if Rāma were to leave her behind.[3] "Without the beloved", she wailed, "I have no faith either in life or happiness."[4]

§ 48. Yet the relationship between the wife and the husband sometimes had not been all too perfect. Kaikeyī's attitude to Daśaratha was not what could be expected from a dutiful wife. Tiffs due to anger or delusion on the part of the wife were well known for Hanumat on seeing Sītā wondered if she was Arundhatī who had fled there after making her husband angry.[5] The husband expressed his displeasure towards the wife by being indifferent as Rāma did when he saw Sītā, after killing Rāvaṇa.[6] Further, in the estimation of the husband the wife seems to have occupied only a secondary position; Rāma placed Sītā after his brother and his argument was that a wife could be found but not so a brother.[7]

§ 49. The wife had certain duties in the household; cooking was apparently her concern. In the forest, Sītā applied mud on the floor of the hut which was built by Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa.[8] She had also to wait upon her husband not only in serving food, which she usually did before she herself ate,[9] but also in fanning him.[10] She was expected to keep her husband happy and as Kausalyā advised Śāntā, the husband was to be honoured always with bland words in private (*priyavādena rahasi*)[11]. Besides, she participated with him in religious rites; for instance Rāma and Sītā together had to fast on the eve of the consecration.[12] Kausalyā played a prominent role in the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice of Daśaratha.[13] And Kalmāṣa was accompanied by his wife when he waited upon Vasiṣṭha.[14] These agree with the injunction in the Dharmaśāstras that women should not perform rites alone.[15] The exception to this rule is also represented in the Rāmāyaṇa which describes how Kausalyā was performing all by herself certain religious ceremonies when Rāma went to see her.[16]

§ 50. The wife, as a rule, was very meek and voluntarily submissive to the husband. A good wife did not lose her temper and a

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1 NW II, 13, 3.
2 NW II, 42, 10.
3 NW II 42, 15. cf. NW II, 30, 22.
4 NW V, 20, 28.
5 NW V 27, 6.
6 NW VI, 95, 65.
7 NW VI, 25, 7 & 16.
8 NW II, 17, 8.
9 NW II, 60, 31; II, 109, 39.
10 NW II, 17, 8. Cf. BE VII, 2, 26.
11 NW I, 12, 16.
12 NW II, 6, 36; II, 7, 2; II, 8, 1.
13 NW I, 10, 25-26.
14 BE VII, 65, 26.
15 Manusmṛti: V, 155.
16 NW II, 20, 5 ff. Cf. Vaidya: RRV p. 10.

special epithet of Anasūyā was "*akrodhanā*" (not angry)[1]. Her speech had to be polite; the last word had to be generally left for the husband. Sītā insisted that she should accompany Rāma to the forest but quite politely allowed the husband to make the final decision; "I should go to the forest with you", she said, "with your approval" (*tvad anujñā-tayā*)[2]. More striking is the instance where Sītā, after expounding certain points of morality and duty so as to dissuade Rāma from killing Rākṣasas, apologized to him, "Through the feebleness of a woman have I told you these. Who indeed is capable of teaching the *dharma* to you? Examining (the position) critically along with your brother may you do whatever does please you."[3] Likewise did Kausalyā feel sorry for speaking rudely to Daśaratha; she asked for pardon saying, "Who like me remembering her birth in a noble family and knowing the (standards of) decorum would speak something unpleasant to her husband?"[4] It was imperative that the wife obeyed her husband; she was expected to do whatever was requested by the husband without questioning whether it be good or otherwise,[5] for the obedience to one's husband was the greatest form of asceticism for the wife.[6] But when she was reduced to helpless and shameful situations she flared up and both the ladies who are depicted as perfect wives in the epic had occasions to find fault with their husbands. Kausalyā, for instance, went to the extent of showing that the father had no say as regards his children,[7] while Sītā expressed her bitterness towards her husband's attitude to her.[8]

§ 51. The foregoing paragraphs make it clear that the wife occupied a position subordinate to the husband. In spite of the claim of Kausalyā she was not consulted on the consecration of her son, the news regarding which she heard from the people;[9] so was Kaikeyī altogether ignorant of the great event till Mantharā told her.[10] Whether the husband regarded the wife as a mere chattel to be disposed in any way he wanted is not certain from the data in the Rāmāyaṇa. In the Mahābhārata such a state is evident from the fact that Yudhiṣṭhira and Nala gamble with dice placing their wives as the stakes. The only instance in the Rāmāyaṇa where the wife is regarded as something that the husband could dispose of as he wished is the practice of kings to offer their wives as part of the fee at the Aśvamedha sacrifice.[11] This is quite likely a survival of an original primitive rite where the sacrificer actually gave away his wives to the priest; however, its survial in the

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1 NW III, 1, 45.
2 NW II, 32, 6.
3 NW III, 10, 28.
4 NW II, 65, 32.
5 NW VI, 95, 20-21; III, 1, 63; BE VII. 48, 18.
6 NW III, 1, 69; II, 27, 21.
7 NW II, 25, 3-18.
8 NW VI, 97, 5-19.
9 NW II, 5, 33 ff.
10 NW II, 9, 4 ff.
11 NW I, 10, 27.

ritual is not sufficiently marked to establish, as S. N. Vyas[1] attempts to do, that the conception of women as chattel was current in the society reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa. The clearest reference to the gift of one's wife occurs only in the BE in a passage which is an easily distinguishable interpolation.[2] On the other hand Rāma's request to Sītā that she might choose as her husband anyone among his brothers, or Sugrīva, Hanumat or Vibhīṣaṇa[3] shows that Rāma gave Sītā the freedom to do what she liked; he did not use his authority as her husband, for it was only a suggestion. The allowance of such freedom of action seems to go contrary to the general belief that the wife was regarded as a chattel of the husband.

§ 52. The noblest duty of the wife towards her husband was to be chaste; chastity has been called "the vow to the husband" (*pativrata*[4] or *bhartṛvrata*[5]) and the wife who observed it was highly honoured as *pativratā*[6] and *bhartṛparāyaṇā*[7] (intent on the husband). She was devoted (*satī*)[8] and had none else in her mind (*ananyacittā*)[9]. Having only one husband—i.e. without resorting to adultery — seems to have been an ideal which the wife tried to maintain (Cf. *ekapatnīvrata*)[10] It was her duty to follow the husband and act according to his wishes.[11]

§ 53 Chastity had been upheld as a great virtue in the Rāmāyana. According to Rāma a chaste wife attains fame in this world and happiness in heaven (*svarga*) in the next.[12] And Sītā herself was aware that a wife acquired much merit by observing the vow of chastity.[13] A further belief was that the wife who is devoted to her husband in this world will follow him after death as well.[14] The ideal wives of the old legends such as Sāvitrī and Arundhatī were referred to as the model.[15] The wife who was not possessed of this virtue was despised; as Anasuyā told Sītā, "Bad women whose hearts are replete with lust — though dependent on their husbands — do not observe this vow in the world. They who are not chaste and are engaged in improper actions attain infamy and also commit a breach of *Dharma*."[16] To force a woman to give up her vow of chastity was viewed as a heinous crime.[17] And the struggle of Sītā to maintain it is an important aspect of the theme of the Rāmāyaṇa. The social stigma attached to adultery (VI §§ 17 ff) implies that a high standard of fidelity was expected from the husband as well. The ideal husband according to the GE is the one who is

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1 Vyas: PO XIII p. 65. Cf. also Dharma: JIH XVII p. 16.
2 BE IV, 24, 38-39.
3 NW VI, 96, 24 ff.
4 NW III, 1, 58; 60; VI, 93, 3; NW VII, 49, 12; I, 6, 10; V, 22,12.
5 NW I, 12, 14; V, 11, 3.
6 NW II, 63, 30; III, 63, 3; V, 15, 1; V, 100, 36.
7 NW II, 42, 7; II, 62, 11; III, 1, 7.
8 NW V, 64, 10 & 12.
9 NW V, 57, 9.
10 NW IV, 57, 15; V, 16, 5.
11 NW II, 73, 10.
12 NW II, 27, 14-15.
13 NW III, 1, 72.
14 NW II, 32, 21.
15 NW III, 1, 70.
16 NW III, 1, 57-58.
17 NW VI, 35, 32.

"*svadārabrahmacārin*," which may be interpreted as "celibate in respect to those other than his own wives."[1] This term, however. may also be explained as meaning "restrained in respect of even one's own wives."

§ 54. To the wife the husband was all important. Without him she attained no happiness[2] for he was to her the giver of all comforts.[3] An oft-repeated verse in the Rāmāyaṇa seeks to place him in more important a position than the father, the mother and the son; "Limited is what a father gives" it says, "limited also is what the mother or the son gives. The giver of the unlimited is the husband and who may not honour him."[4] No relative could be considered more distinguished than the husband[5] and Anasūyā described him as more beloved than the father.[6] An interesting account of the relative position of the husband and the son in the wife's life is found in a statement of Tārā at the death of Vālin.[7] The sole refuge of a good wife was her husband and not her father, mother, son or friends.[8]

§ 55. The Rāmāyaṇa emphasizes right through that the husband was a god to the wife,[9] whether he be immoral or poor.[10] He is a respected elder (*guru*)[11] to her even though he be a pauper.[12] Whether great or otherwise he was her only refuge and he was the most prominent in her estimation.[13] To her he was an ornament.[14] The high regard which the wife had for the husband is clearly stated by Kausalyā, "The husband is the relative, the refuge, the elder and also the good. He alone to women is the hermitage (*āśrama*) and the holy *tīrtha*."[15]

§ 56. The husband was, naturally, expected to protect and maintain his wife.[16] He rewarded her for the happiness afforded him by the wife; and as recorded in the Uttarakāṇḍa, Pulastya being pleased with his wife gave her the boon of a son.[17] Besides, the wife who made her husband happy is stated to attain eternal bliss in both this and the next world.[18] It was not always that the husband occupied the more important position in the family. There were those who were henpecked and Daśaratha who called himself a "*strījita*" (conquered by a woman) was a typical example.[19] That such a man was no doubt censured in society is a fact reflected in the Rāmāyana.[20]

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1 GE II, 66, 43.
2 NW II, 42, 10.
3 NW II, 42, 12.
4 NW II, 42, 11; IV, 16, 34; GE II, 38, 25; IV, 20, 4.
5 NW III, 1, 56.
6 NW III, 1, 64.
7 NW IV, 15, 17; IV, 16, 6-8; IV, 16, 25.
8 NW II, 30, 8. Cf., however, BE II, 61, 24.
9 NW II, 26, 4; II, 27, 6; II, 28, 12; II, 42, 18; II, 32, 17; V, 19, 10; VI, 95, 70; VI, 100, 48; VII, 49, 19; BE VII, 95, 10.
10 NW III, 1, 55.
11 NW II, 26, 9; II, 30, 6; III, 1, 62.
12 NW V, 19,10.
13 NW II, 27, 8; II, 67, 4; III, 50, 8.
14 NW V, 11, 15.
15 NW II, 72, 42.
16 Cf. GE V, 36, 18 & 24.
17 BE VII, 2, 30.
18 NW III, 1, 54; VI, 8, 33; BE II, 62, 13.
19 NW II, 21, 7; II, 37, 18.
20 NW II, 14, 8.

§ 57. The relationship between the husband and the wife — as we have outlined from the data of the Rāmāyaṇa — had been determined by the prevailing conception of the position of the woman in ancient Indian culture. The fact that the husband was always regarded as superior to the wife is undoubtedly the result of the relative positions which man and woman held in society. And as such the foregoing account is of considerable help in assessing the position of women in ancient India.

D. The Position of Women

§ 58. As we have already observed the birth of a son has been hoped for by ancient Indians in preference to that of a daughter (IV § 29). The importance attached to the son resulted in relegating the daughter to the background. But when a girl was born it is quite likely that she was taken good care of and brought up with affection so that she could be given in marriage to a noble family, thus increasing the prestige of her own family. For instance Janaka's only child Sītā apparently was loved by her parents, whose desire to obtain for her a valorous husband was clear from the skill-contest, which they held as her *svayaṃvara* (VI §§ 28 f.) A girl about the house was not disliked according to the Rāmāyaṇa data, if it was so Lomapāda would never have adopted Daśaratha's daughter, Śāntā (IV § 29). Here was not sheer resignation to fate as might have been in the case of the birth of a girl. A verse which is repeated twice in the Uttarakāṇḍa may give the impression that the fathers shuddered at the thought of begetting daughters; "To all who desire honour," it says, "to be the father of a girl is a misery."[1] As reasons are given the facts that one does not know to whom she will be married and that she keeps three families — the father's, mother's and that to which she is given (i.e. the husband's) — in suspense.[2] The term "*kanyāpitṛtvam*" is to be given due consideration in understanding this passage. It means to be the father of an unmarried girl. As such it reflects more the odium attached to an unmarried grown-up girl rather than to girls in general. The same idea urged Janaka to hold Sītā's *svayaṃvara;* as Sītā put it, "The father of an unmarried girl (*kanyāpitā*) though equal to Śakra was subject to insult from equals, inferiors and superiors."[3]

§ 59. It is not clear from the data in the Rāmāyaṇa whether girls were given any regular education. But the female characters of the epic were not altogether ignorant. Kausalyā narrated two legends concerning Śakra and Kāśyapa to prove that the son should obey the

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1 BE VII, 9, 10; VII, 12, 12. 2 BE VII, 9, 10-11; VII, 12, 12.

3 NW III, 2, 23.

mother.[1] Kaikeyī found recourse to the history of the Ikṣvāku dynasty to justify the banishment of Rāma.[2] Sītā was capable of not only relating stories but also quoting didactic verses in support of her argument that it was not proper for ascetics to wield weapons[3] and also to expound the ideal of wifely fidelity.[4] And Tārā's statement to Vālin evinces her familiarity with the theories of polity[5] while in talking to Lakṣmaṇa she referred to the experiences of Viśvāmitra.[6] The author or the authors of the Rāmāyaṇa did not find it unrealistic to attribute these statements to women, thus implying that the women of the period reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa were educated enough to utter them. In fact Kaikeyī was boasting about her power of education (*vidyābala*)[7]. How they acquired their knowledge is uncertain. Unlike males they were in all probability not given a formal course of training and were not taught the Vedas. The Rāmāyaṇa makes no mention of a woman who was well-versed in the Vedic literature. The recensions do not agree as to whether Kausalyā in her rites on the day of Rāma's consecration used Vedic (hymns;) only the BE mentions that she sacrificed at the fire with hymns (*mantravat*)[8]. The aspects of literature known for certain to the women seem to have been the Purāṇas and the Smṛtis. These they might have learnt from their parents, from the Brahmans who visited their household[9] and from holy women like Anasūyā, whom they occasionally met.[10] The popular form of recreation by story-telling (V § 69) also appears to have contributed to improve their knowledge.

§ 60. Besides the theoretical knowledge which they acquired in an unorganized manner, they received instruction in such feminine accomplishments as dancing and singing (V § 93). Hemā, for instance, was an expert in song and dance (*nṛtya-gītaviśārada*)[11]. The women of the more warlike west, as Kaikeyī, were apparently taught such requirements in the battle-field as first aid.[12]

§ 61. The woman's position as the wife has been already discussed (VI §§ 47 ff.) As a mother she was honoured by her children but only as secondary to the father. And this may explain the attempt of Kausalyā to assert the supremacy of the mother and urge Rāma to declare civil war.[13] She stated, "An *Upādhyāya* is greater than ten Brahmans in the degree of honour deserved; and the father is greater than ten Upādhyāyas. The mother, alone, surpasses in honour ten fathers, and the whole earth. Who is the elder who is equal to the

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1 NW II, 21, 22-24.
2 NW II, 39, 16.
3 NW III, 10, 10-27.
4 NW II, 33, 6; BE V, 24, 9-12.
5 NW IV, 10, 9-13; IV, 11, 2-5.
6 NW IV, 28, 6-9.
7 NW II, 11, 45-46.
8 BE II, 20, 15; Cf. NW II, 20, 5 ff.
9 Cf. NW VI, 8, 33.
10 NW III, 1, 61 ff.
11 NW IV, 42, 18. Cf. V. 2, 26.
12 NW II, 11, 14-15.
13 NW II, 21, 22-24.

mother?"[1] But Rāma does not seem to agree with her theory for he did not obey her in preference to the father. The mother's second refuge was her son.[2] She who had her sons alive was respected in society; hence was Tārā addressed by the Vānaras as "*Jīvaputre*",[3] an epithet used as a honorific later for the chief queen of Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi in the Nāsik Cave Inscription *circa* 130 A.D. (*mahādevīya ca jīvasutāya*)[4].

§ 62. However, the Rāmāyaṇa reveals that men of ancient India had not been always kind to their womenfolk. Abduction, rape and undue suspicion had been her lot, (VI §§ 19 ff.). The woman seems to have been regarded as not only physically[5] but also emotionally deficient. Her tenderness (*kāruṇya*) was admitted to be a weakness as Mandodarī stated while lamenting the death of Rāvaṇa.[6] The nature of a woman (*strīsvabhāva*) was fickleness (*cāpalya*)[7]; it was abominable for she made grave statements.[8] And it led her to the breach of the *Dharma* (*dharmasaṅkaṭa*)[9]. She was shallow in her ways[10] and was by nature cowardly.[11] She was credulous and her "nature was to accept immediately without critically examining whatever was told her by one of her own people, even though he is a fool."[12] To Lakṣmaṇa is attributed the statement, "This is said to be the nature of the women in the three worlds: Women are bereft of *dharma*, fickle and in the habit of causing dissension among brothers."[13] More vehement was the criticism levelled at women by Agastya, "They prefer a state of ease and comfort (*padastha* according to the NW, *sadastha* according to the BE and *samastha* according to the commentary) and give up a difficult one. They imitate the inconsistency of lightning, the sharpness of swords and the speed of fire and wind. And even the "*kālakūṭa*" poison does not kill as women do."[14] A woman was regarded as a hindrance to higher spiritual attainments of man, for Viśvāmitra complained that all his asceticism and wisdom were destroyed by a woman in one step.[15]

§ 63. But a woman was not altogether without honour in society. A good woman was called a jewel (*strīratna*)[16]. She was not always cowardly for Kaikeyī followed her husband to the battle-field and assisted him in his difficulties while Kausalyā was audacious enough to second the proposal of Lakṣmaṇa to commence a civil strife.[17] The wives

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1 NW II, 25, 13-14.
2 BE II, 61, 24.
3 NW IV, 15, 11.
4 Sircar: *Select Inscriptions* I p. 193.
5 BE VII, 26, 51; GE III, 19, 5.
6 NW VI, 92, 25.
7 NW VI, 23, 7; 90, 47; V, BE VI, 16, 9.
8 NW III, 50, 31.
9 NW II, 21, 43.
10 NW VI, 43, 33.
11 NW VI, 45, 27; GE III, 19, 5.
12 NW II, 11, 34.
13 NW III, 50, 29.
14 NW III, 17, 5-6; Cf, BE II 13, 5-6.
15 NW I, 59, 16.
16 NW III, 39, 27; V, 4, 54; V, 87, 14
17 NW II, 21, 19 ff.

of kings were invited to attend the Court on special occasions; and Daśaratha had with him his three hundred and fifty wives when he wished goodbye to Rāma.[1] Women were present at important functions and ceremonies such as consecrations and royal receptions.[2] As the Uttarakāṇḍa shows they also could present themselves before the king to get their grievances redressed.[3] Further, a verse in the BE attributed to Vasiṣṭha indicates that a woman could have been a ruler; it says "The wives are the very souls of all those who adhere to the maintenance of wives; this one (i.e. Sītā) is the soul of Rāma and shall rule the earth."[4] This reference is of utmost importance even if it were to belong to the latest strata of the development of the Rāmāyaṇa, because it reveals the possibility of having queens as rulers in ancient India. Although in Ceylon history we meet with queens who were absolute rulers as early as 12 A.D.[5], it was a very rare occurrence in India and none of the ancient dynasties record a name of a female ruler.

§ 64. By the younger brothers of her husband, a woman was treated with utmost cordiality. Śatrughna saluted Sītā by touching her feet.[6] And Lakṣmaṇa had never looked into the face of Sītā; the BE states as words of Lakṣmaṇa, "I do not know her bracelets, nor her earrings; but as I worship her often I recognize her anklets."[7] And again in the Uttarakāṇḍa he says to her, "I have never seen your form before; I have only seen your feet. Now how can I look at you in the forest when Rāma is away."[8] It was regarded to be a grave sin even to think lustfully about the wife of a friend or a teacher.[9] Whether women enjoyed precedence in mounting vehicles and boats always, as surmised by Dharma,[10] is doubtful. At Ayodhyā she is said to have mounted last (*Sītā tṛtīyāvārūḍhau*)[11]. At Śṛṅgaverapura Lakṣmaṇa helped Sītā to the boat first; but the actual order of Rāma was for Lakṣmaṇa to get in first and then help Sītā.[12]

§ 65. The presence of women was to be respected. It was not proper to shout or challenge in their presence;[13] and so was it considered improper to fight before them.[14] From two references in the BE and the GE it appears that men treated them with civility. Śūrpaṇakhā told Rāvaṇa that she was spared by Rāma because she was a woman,[15] while Hanumat is said to have hit Laṅkā only lightly because he regarded her to be a woman.[16] Killing a woman was a very serious crime for she

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1 NW II, 38, 8.
2 NW II, 16, 11; VI, 108, 8.
3 BE VII, 53, 5.
4 BE II, 37, 24. (not NW)
5 Cf. Mendis: *The Early History of Ceylon*. p. 121.
6 NW VI, 108, 41.
7 BE IV, 6, 22-23.
8 BE VII, 48, 21-22.
9 NW II, 83, 6.
10 Dharma: JIH XVII p. 25.
11 NW II, 43, 22.
12 NW II, 56, 9-11.
13 NW IV, 8, 27.
14 BE VII, 32, 29.
15 GE III, 38, 11.
16 BE V, 3, 41.

was to be pardoned always.[1] The murderers of women were destined to receive terrible retribution in the next birth.[2] But it appears that it was still allowed under certain circumstances. Viśvāmitra in convincing Rāma that he was right in killing Tāṭakā narrated the stories of Śakra and Viṣṇu killing Dīrghajihvā and Kāvyamātā and implied that immoral and troublesome women could be killed by those who acted according to the kingly *Dharma* (*rājadharmavicāribhiḥ*)[3]. Yet no such scruples seem to have existed in the case of disfiguring a woman, for Lakṣmaṇa quite readily cut off the ears and the nose of Śūrpaṇakhā.[4]

§ 66. A problem of immense importance in estimating the position of woman in society is whether she was, by custom or legislation, forced to be secluded, as in the case of the Purdah system. Just as in the Mahābhārata,[5] we find in the Rāmāyaṇa too, evidence both for and against the seclusion of women. We have references to girls who played on the royal highway.[6] Then there were women who came to parks with their lovers and those who went to forests with them in chariots (V § 65 and VI § 12). Women went in the procession of Rāma scattering flowers on the road.[7] And the wives of Daśaratha went in vehicles to receive Rāma when he returned to Ayodhyā.[8] The girls who came to the penance grove of Pulastya to sing and play musical instruments were so boisterous as to disturb the sage.[9]

§ 67. On the other hand Kuśanābha's daughters are said to have been debarred from moving about at will (*na vayaṃ svairacārinyaḥ*)[10]. The people of Ayodhyā felt sorry that ordinary people saw Sītā, who could not be seen by even the gods who moved about in the sky and that she was being discoloured by coldness, heat and the winds.[11] According to a reading in the NW she appeared before Rāma and his army in Laṅkā with a cloth to cover her face (*vastrasaṃvītamukhī*)[12]. But this reading cannot be relied upon very much. The BE informs us that women who respected traditions lived only in their homes;[13] and women went to the funeral of Daśaratha in vehicles and palanquins duly chaperoned by old men (*vṛddhaiḥ parivṛtāḥ*)[14]. But at the funeral they seem to have wailed throwing their hands into the air and beating their heads, breasts and knees.[15] The fact that women could attend the funeral of Daśaratha and also that of Vālin[16] shows that they were permitted to give up the Purdah on certain occasions. These are recounted by Rāma as follows, "In times of calamity, war, and difficulty, at the self-choice ceremony,

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1 NW VI, 71, 59-60; V, 17, 11; VI, 59, 29; II, 81, 26.
2 NW VI, 59, 23
3 NW I, 23, 15-21.
4 NW III, 23, 21.
5 Sidhanta: HAI p. 158-159.
6 NW II, 73, 16 (not BE)
7 NW II, 17, 35.
8 NW VI, 108, 17.
9 BE VII, 2, 11.
10 NW I. 30, 26-27.
11 NW II, 36, 9-10.
12 NW VI, 95, 68.
13 BE II, 45, 25.
14 BE II, 76, 19.
15 NW II, 72, 51.
16 Cf. NW IV, 18, 23.

the sacrifice and marriage the sight of women is not objectionable."[1] And further he said in permitting Sītā to see him amidst his army, "She has come to war and is in a grave difficulty; hence there is no fault in being seen especially in my presence."[2] These refer to a strict custom of keeping the women in seclusion with specially formulated rules as regards giving it up temporarily. But it appears that men who in all probability enforced these rules on women, were always not convinced of its indispensability. For instance, Rāma who knew the rules on the Purdah system, stated equally forcefully that neither houses nor clothes could serve as a covering for women; their virtue alone was *the* veil.[3]

§ 68. The data in the Rāmāyaṇa on the Purdah system are, as seen in the above paragraphs, somewhat confusing. In the case of the Mahābhārata Sidhanta explains the situation as brought about by the length of the period taken for the growth of the epic. He says, "So here, as before, we seem faced by the customs of different ages in different parts of the epic. It is probable that while in earlier days a good deal of freedom was allowed to all women, things had greatly changed by the time the epic had come to be written down."[4] The same may be said about the Rāmāyaṇa too. But another explanation is also possible. The difference in the practice of the Purdah custom by different sections of the female population may also be dependent on the caste and the class differences which existed among them. The cases of rigid Purdah referred to in the Rāmāyaṇa are about the Kṣatriya women; hence it is quite probable that the women of the other castes were not influenced by the rules about their seclusion. If this was so the Rāmāyaṇa—as also the Mahābhārata, the Jain texts[5] and the Jātakas[6]—represents the transition from total freedom to total seclusion of women in ancient India. Accordingly the move towards Purdah might have started first in the ranks of the Kṣatriya caste and thence gradually spread to other classes.

§ 69. It is, however, important to observe that the general notions regarding woman's fickleness and emotional deficiencies (VI, § 62) had not prevented them from striving for high spiritual attainments. The view which the Buddha too held, namely that women were capable of attaining spiritual bliss,[7] seems to have been current for the Rāmāyaṇa mentions a number of female ascetics, to wit, Anasūyā,[8] Śabarī,[9] Svayaṃprabhā[10] and Vedavatī,[11] of whom Anasūyā was practising strict asceticism and restraint for (in the epic exaggeration) a ten thousand

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1 NW VI, 95, 57.
2 NW VI, 95, 58.
3 NW VI, 95, 56.
4 Sidhanta: HAI p. 160.
5 Cf. Jain: LIJC p. 163.
6 Cf. Mehta: PBI pp. 290-291.
7 Aṅguttara Nikāya (P.T.S.) IV. p. 276. Vinaya II p. 253 ff.
8 NW III, 1, 38 ff.
9 NW III, 80, 7-8.
10 NW IV, 41, 34.
11 BE VII, 17, 2.

years; she was holy and through her ascetic powers created yams and fruit and changed the course of the Ganges during a ten-year drought: And once to accomplish a certain work of the gods she condensed ten nights into one.[1] These ascetic women moved about in the forests with no escort and it is clear that the custom of seclusion did not apply to them.

§ 70. The Rāmāyaṇa reveals that there were, in the society of ancient India, working girls besides those who married and ran homes. But the only profession they seem to have followed is that of attendants and servants.[2] They were employed by the royalty and their duties appear to have included not only simple household work[3] but also waking the master and bathing him.[4] And it is worthwhile noting that no objection was taken by men on being bathed by women. What treatment was meted out to these attendants is not known from the data of the Rāmāyaṇa. However, it is likely that many of them were slaves like Mantharā who could be freed from slavery as a mark of gratitude for some favour done by them.

§ 71. The epic mentions a number of instances where women were given away as gifts. When they were offered as brides according to the Brahma form of marriage (VI § 25), and when they were given in marriage as a mark of gratitude as in the case of Bharata presenting sixteen wives to Hanumat[5] the question whether the women were regarded as chattels does not arise. And when the other instances of similar gifts are examined it appears that the women normally given away were slaves. They were slaves who were given by Janaka as Sītā's *kanyādhana* (VI § 36); and Bharata offered Hanumat a hundred slave-girls.[6] So did Bharata give away slaves at the Śrāddha ceremony of his father according to the BE.[7] The only reference,[8] where the fact that the women were slaves is not mentioned, is extremely doubtful. Vyas, however, has taken the word "*vayasthāna*" to mean young girls and has concluded that Viśvāmitra offered a bevy of girls to Vasiṣṭha as barter-value of his cow.[9] He appears to be misled by the Commentary[10] for the word along with *nānāvarṇavibhaktānām* can be best construed as an adjective of *gavāṃ*. As the reliable citations show the women were given away because they were slaves and this has nothing to do with the concept that women were articles possessed by men to be disposed of in any way they liked. In fact the BE has a reference to the gifts of male slaves as well.[11] These observations along with those made earlier (VI §§ 63 f) do not warrant us to regard the position of women in the

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1 NW III, 1, 38-42.
2 NW IV, 24, 26; V, 4, 47; VI, 109, 12; VI, 102, 3; V, 4, 53; BE II, 65, 9 & 12.
3 NW VI, 109, 12.
4 BE II, 65, 12 & 9; NW VI, 102, 3.
5 NW VI, 106, 52.
6 NW VI, 106, 53.
7 BE II, 77, 3.
8 NW I, 48, 46.
9 Vyas: PO XIII p.64.
10 Cf. Commy. on BE I, 53, 20.
11 BE II, 77, 3.

society reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa as so low as for them to be regarded as mere chattels.

§ 72. The Rāmāyaṇa is silent on the question of inheritance and ownership of property on the part of women. The dowry which she received might or might not have been her own property. Anyway, there did not in all probability exist a custom of returning the dowry when abandoning the wife. At least no mention of it is made when Rāma abandoned Sītā in the forest.

§ 73. To recapitulate the data in the Rāmāyaṇa, we may conclude firstly that girls were not disliked although sons were preferred, secondly that they were not given a formal education in spite of the fact that some women were learned in the Purāṇas and Smṛtis, thirdly that they were considered to be emotionally deficient though they were capable of spiritual attainments, and, finally that they were honoured and were not regarded as mere chattels of men despite the fact that men were throughout reckoned to be superior to them. The degeneration of their position is to be placed in the period subsequent to that reflected by the epic. However, its beginning is traceable therein in the imposition of partial seclusion on Kṣatriya women.

CHAPTER VII

BELIEFS AND SUPERSTITIONS

A. Worlds, Beings and Gods

§ 1. A study of the social conditions of ancient India cannot be complete unless the beliefs and the superstitions current among the the people are taken into consideration. These are specifically useful not so much for the determination of the standard achieved in cultural development within a limited period but for the understanding of the cultural pattern of the nation. While the material civilization and even the social conventions undergo sudden changes due to external influences the beliefs which have come down from generation to generation persist with a little or no modification. This is borne out by the fact that every culture of the world preserves survivals from primitive strata despite opposing influences of later times; for instance the Buddhists of Ceylon still maintain primitive cults for the propitiation of gods and demons in spite of the fact that Buddhism did not favour them. As such it is not surprising to find that the ancient Indian beliefs and superstitions of the various stages of their development change only as regards the details while they have remained almost static in outline.

§ 2. A considerable amount of research has been done on this aspect of Indian culture. The data afforded by the Rāmāyaṇa, too, have been amply dealt with by E. W. Hopkins in his "Epic Mythology". As such our aim in this section is only to add to and comment on the material utilised by him. Although many more references to various cosmological and mythological facts could be gathered from the Rāmāyaṇa than Hopkins had done, it is not attempted here because they do not seem to contribute substantially to the modification of his observations.

§ 3. To deal first with the Cosmology as contained in the Rāmāyaṇa, we have to note that the traditional conception of the three worlds is known to the epic. As Hopkins observes the term "*triloka*"[1] is chiefly proverbial and becomes a mere formula."[2] It seems to convey the idea of unlimited space; and it is likely that the number three is what comes down from the Ṛgvedic concept of three spheres, heaven, earth and air.[3] Consequently there is a fair degree of uncertainty in the epic as regards

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1 NW II, 30, 15; II, 38, 29; II, 53, 15; II, 68, 9, III, 61, 26; BE VII, 20, 19.

2 Hopkins: EM p. 60.

3 Cf. Wallis: CRV p. 114.

the actual division of the three worlds. Hopkins[1] has noted two definitions of the three worlds occurring in the Rāmāyaṇa: viz. as the worlds of the Devas, the Asuras and the men (*devāsuramānuṣa*)[2] and as those of the Devas, the Gandharvas and the Dānavas (*devagandharvadānava*)[3]. A further explanation is found in the Bālakāṇḍa where the three worlds are said to be those of the Devas, the men and the Nāgas (*devanaranāga*)[4]. The difficulty in maintaining any degree of uniformity, experienced by the authors of the epic, was due to the fact that the Cosmology current at their times spoke of much more than three worlds; the Rāmāyaṇa itself mentions the worlds of Devas and Gandharvas,[5] of Brahma and the firmament (*nākaloka*)[6], and of Indra and Viṣṇu.[7] And in attempting to preserve a traditional number despite the multiplicity it is possible that various combinations and permutations had to be made.

§ 4. It is worthwhile noting, *en passant*, that Hopkins conjectures that the belief in numerous worlds was due to Buddhist influences; he says, "the later writers influenced by Buddhism are not content with a few worlds and proceed to pile worlds on worlds as homes of the blest and the gods."[8] It is difficult to accept this explanation for the tendency to multiply the worlds is observed in the Upaniṣads of the pre-Buddhistic period.[9] It is true that Buddhist cosmology encompasses no less than sixteen Brahmalokas, six heavens and four hells and altogether with the earth twenty-seven worlds. But the worlds which have been conceived by the writers of the epic have no semblance to these at all. They have greater affinity with the system of Brahmanical mythology for the many worlds are distinguished according to the gods,[10] who have them as their abodes. They agree more closely with the accounts of the Upaniṣads—in fact some like the *Gandharvaloka* are common to both the Upaniṣads and the epics. As such it is not at all necessary to postulate the influence of Buddhism to explain the multiplicity of worlds in the epic cosmology.

§ 5. The Rāmāyaṇa throws some light on the concept of the earth as was apparently accepted by the ancient Indians. The earth was considered to be made up of seven continents (*saptadvīpān*) with seven oceans.[11] But a reference is also found to four oceans.[12] The earth was borne, it was believed, by four elephants in the four directions—*Virūpākṣa* in the east (Cf. *Virūpakkha* of Buddhism—one of the four great regional rulers—*cattāro mahārājāno*), *Mahāpadma* on the South, *Saumanasa* on the west and *Himapāṇḍura* on the north.[13] More important details can be obtained from the geographical cantos of the Kiṣkindhā

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1 Hopkins: EM p. 60.
2 BE VII, 5, 11.
3 NW VI, 98, 34.
4 NW I, 20, 13; VI, 81, 152.
5 NW III, 71, 17.
6 NW III, 6, 25; III, 45, 15.
7 NW IV, 36, 122; I, 1, 95.
8 Hopkins: EM. p. 60.
9 Cf. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad: IV, 3, 33.
10 Cf. Hopkins: EM p.61.
11 NW VI, 81, 47-48; III, 81, 4.
12 NW V, 45, 12.
13 NW I, 37, 12-21.

kāṇḍa which as we have observed (II § 54) combine geographical data with Cosmology in an attempt to represent the whole world. They cannot be relied upon to depict the same period as the major part of the epic as they belong to the later strata of the Rāmāyaṇa (II § 53). According to them there is to the east of Jambudvīpa a mountain by name Śivira, resorted to by gods and Dānavas.[1] Beyond it were the sea of Kālodaka, the pleasure hills of Dānava chiefs, the great river Mahānāda, the ocean Lauhitya, the abode of Suparṇa, the mountain Gośṛṅga, the Rākṣasas called Mandeha, the ocean Kṣīroda, the silver mountain of Śubha, the lake Sudarśanā resorted to by Kinnaras, Cāraṇas, Yakṣas, Gandharvas etc., the great sea of Ghṛtoda, the Vaḍavāmukha, and the golden mountain called Jātarūpaśilā where was seated the *god* Ananta with a thousand heads wearing a blue garment; there was the golden mountain of Udaya with the peak Saumanasa where the Vaikhānas were—the dawn is rendered reddish by this peak coming in contact with the rays of the sun. Beyondthis was darkness.[2]

§ 6. To the south beyond the island of a hundred yojanas, which possibly stands for Laṅkā (II § 43), was the mountain Mahendra to which Indra came regularly. Beyond it were a golden mountain whose peak reached the Brahma world and which no sinful person saw, the ocean for fourteen yojanas, the mountains Vidyutvat and Mālyavat, the mountain Kuñjara and the abode of Agastya built on it. Thence were the river Añjanā, and the great city of Bhogavatī wherein Vāsuki, the king of the snakes, lived. Beyond it there were a *toraṇa* to mark the southern direction, a great mountain called Ṛṣabha, the forest guarded by the Rohita Gandharvas and resorted to by multitudes of divine Apsarasas, and the mountain Triśṛṅga from which flowed the river Saumanasā. Further south was the realm of Yama (*Yamaloka*). Beyond it was a golden mountain where Tṛṇāṅgi had his hermitage. The land beyond was in perpetual darkness.[3]

§ 7. Similarly in the west the realms beyond Gandhāra are described so as to suit the Cosmological beliefs of the time. There were the western ocean with a golden peak where twenty-four Gandharvas lived, the mountain Cakravān which was the disc created by Viśvakarman to attack the Asuras, the land of the five tribes, the mountain Varāha of sixty-four yojanas, the golden city of Prāgjyotiṣa where lived the Dānava Naraka, and the mountain of Śakra where on the rock called Suṣena he was consecrated. Beyond it were sixty thousand golden mountains with golden peaks, in the midst of which was situated the mountain Meru which according to a boon from the sun decided the day and the night; the Ādityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the Maruts and the Aśvins came

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1 NW IV, 32, 24. 2 NW IV, 32, 25-56.

3 NW IV, 33, 30-70.

there in the evening to worship the sun. Thence the sun went a million yojanas to the western mountain (*astaṃ parvatam*) within a wink of the eye. There, was created by Viśvakarman the abode of Varuṇa. And beyond it was darkness.[1]

§ 8. In the northern direction the cosmological account begins with the region beyond the Himālayas which in itself is a place frequented by divine and semi-divine beings. There were the terrible mountains of Kāla, Himagarbha, Ākāśa, a desert, a forest, and the Mountain Kailāsa on which was the abode of Vaiśravaṇa. Beyond it were the Mountain Triśṛṅga with a celestial pond and with peaks of gold, cat's eyes and silver, the Mountain Triśikhara where Śiva was, and the mountains Krauñca and Gandhamādana, where on a peak was the Jambu tree which was the banner of Jambudvīpa. Thence was Maināka where the seven sages had their hermitage. Beyond it was the land where no stars shone and where the Siddhas were lustrous. Further to the north were the mountain Mandara on which the Ganges fell, the rivers Kauśikī, Vaitaraṇī and Lohitodā, the northern shore, the Śaravaṇa where Kārtikeya was born, the river Śailodā, and the Uttarakurus where all were happy. There were the Mandākinī river and the Caitraratha forest. Beyond it was the Soma mountain on the shore of the northern ocean and it was guarded by the gods of the Indra and the Brahma worlds. Farther was the land where the light of the sun was found, though the sun itself was not seen, and there lived Manu, the son of Brahmā. Beyond it were the mountain Somagiri and Śikhāsthāna.[2]

§ 9. These accounts help us to understand the concepts of the ancient Indians as regards the formation of the world. They are all sober accounts of the geography of India, to begin with, which gradually dwindle into a series of cosmological notes. These show us that the concept prevalent towards the latter stage of the development of the epic is somewhat different from that current in the Buddhistic times. The Buddhist texts speak of the four continents, Uttarakuru, Pubbavideha, Aparagoyāna and Jambudvīpa,[3] while the Jain Canon which represents a more complicated idea still mentions among others the Pubbavideha, Uttarakuru and the Jambudvīpa.[4] But the Rāmāyaṇa makes no note of both the Pubbavideha and the Aparagoyāna. Nor is the Buddhist and the Jain concept of circular continents with circular oceans, one encircling the other, with the Mount Meru as the centre referred to in the epic. But on the other had some interesting similarities between the epic and the Buddhist and Jain accounts of heaven and hell are traceable and this we shall do in the chapter on religion because the concepts about them are more religious than cosmological (VIII §§ 66-75).

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1 NW IV, 35, 27-69.
2 NW IV, 36, 18-130.
3 Mehta: PBI p. 364.
4 Jain: LIJC p. 248.

§ 10. The Rāmāyaṇa records also the four yugas which are characterized as symbolising four stages of social degeneration (IV § 15). The end of a *yuga* (yuganta) was regarded as the end of the world (*lokakṣaya*).[1] The most popular belief, as judged from the number of references, seems to be that the world would be burnt by a horrible fire which could set even the oceans in flames.[2] The sun was expected to scorch the world with its heat[3] while the winds would become fierce[4] and meteors would fall on the earth.[5]

§ 11. Besides gods, men, animals and birds the Rāmāyaṇa mentions a series of beings, whose relation to earthly existence is a problem of utmost difficulty. The question, in other words, is to what extent could one relate these beings with actual men and animals of the world. The solution is hampered, firstly, by the fact that some beings such as the Rākṣasas and the Piśācas show traces of both an empirical existence as tribes as well as a mythological aspect as demi-gods and demons; secondly, the Rāmāyaṇa does not provide us with sufficient data to under stand the beliefs and concepts underlying their mythological forms. However, a detailed study was possible when the material of the Mahābhārata, too, was taken into consideration and this has been accomplished by Hopkins, who has collected a considerable amount of information on the subject.[6] Important also are the comments of Vaidya on some of these beings especially because he attempts to connect them with certain Indian tribes which are either extant or extinct.[7]

§ 12. The accounts in the Rāmāyaṇa help us only to prepare a list of the beings because they are practically always mentioned in lists as spectators of various incidents of the epic story. They are the *Asuras*[8] called also the *Danavas*[9] and the *Daityas*,[10] the *Bhūtas*[11] (which might have been a general term to mean all spirits), the *Pitṛs*[12], the *Pretas*,[13] the *Gandharvas*,[14] the *Rākṣasas*,[15] the *Yakṣas*,[16] the *Piśācas*,[17] the Nāgas[18] (called also the *Uragas*[19] and the *Pannagas*[20]), the *Kinnaras*[21]

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1 NW VI, 69, 31; VI, 16, 9; BE VII, 22, 27.
2 NW III, 71, 1; V, 71, 7; VI, 54, 23; VI, 77, 13; VI, 79, 37; VI, 84, 11; VI, 46, 75; V, 43, 8; IV, 12, 23; BE VII, 32, 39; II, 61, 21.
3 NW IV, 13, 3; VI, 82 62; IV, 11, 3; VI, 74, 12.
4 NW VI, 16, 102; VI, 75, 2; VI, 79, 4.
5 NW VI, 84, 25.
6 Hopkins: EM pp. 29-52; pp. 21 ff.; pp. 23 ff.
7 Vaidya: RRV pp. 94-95.
8 NW V, 27, 9; V, 47, 27; VI, 37, 134.
9 NW III, 36, 24; IV, 35, 44; VI, 16, 74.
10 NW I, 40, 29; VI, 13, 26.
11 NW II, 28, 35; VI, 37, 134; VI, 49, 51.
12 NW I, 45, 5 & 8; V, 91, 54-55.
13 NW VI, 11, 33.
14 NW III, 36, 24; III, 50, 10; III, 70, 11; IV, 36, 104; VI, 16, 55.
15 NW II, 28, 30; III, 36, 24; III, 70, 11; IV, 60, 16; V, 27, 9.
16 NW II, 28, 30; III, 36, 24; V, 91, 54; VI, 16, 55 & 74.
17 NW II, 28, 30; III, 50, 10; III, 70, 11; V, 91, 55.
18 NW V, 78, 8; IV, 36, 104; IV, 62, 12-38; V, 27, 9; V, 44, 22.
19 NW III, 36, 24; VI, 16, 74; VI, 37, 134.
20 NW III, 50, 11; IV, 60, 16; V,47, 27.
21 NW III, 50, 10; V, 27, 9; V, 47, 27; V, 91, 54-55.

(to which group belong also the *Aśvamukhīs*),[1] the *Siddhas*,[2] the *Vidyādharas*,[3] the Cāraṇas,[4] the *Apsarasas*,[5] the *Guhyakas*,[6] the *Suparṇas*[7] of whom *Garuḍa*[8] was one, the *Cakradharas* (?)[9] and the *Hahāhukūs*.[10]

§ 13. The Rāmāyaṇa has numerous references to gods. Besides accounts of their worship the epic alludes to them in myths and similes. It knows few myths which are not included in the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas; the fact that they occur mainly in the first and the last kāṇḍas and that they stand quite independently in the epic shows that they could have been added at a later time when the Purāṇic influence was pronounced. However, two important myths about the war between the gods and the Asuras[11] and the churning of the ocean for *Amṛta* with Mandara as the churning rod and Vāsuki as a rope[12] find occasional reference in the other kāṇḍas as well. Those connected with Indra such as the killing of Vṛtra,[13] and of Śambara,[14] the clipping of the wings of mountains[15] and the abduction of Paulomī[16] and the Ṛgvedic myth about Viṣṇu's three strides in its popular form also occur in similes of the older portion of the epic.

§ 14. It is interesting to observe that in this part the Rāmāyaṇa shows no predilection for any particular god and that many of the Vedic gods occur in similes; although the general impression is that the Rāmāyaṇa extols Viṣṇu, the number of similes where Viṣṇu is upheld as a standard of comparison is about one fourth of the similes glorifying Indra, while Brahmā and Rudra together have less allusions to them than Viṣṇu.[17] This is no doubt a very significant fact because it helps us to establish the actual origin of the epic as a heroic poem. Indra, the Aryan war-god, undoubtedly has to be given a prominent place in an epic which recounts the victories of a hero in battle. Viṣṇu emerges in some parts as particularly a priestly god and as such the allusions to Viṣṇu are in the form of hymns sung in praise of him by gods, Nārada, Brahmā and Daśaratha who came from heaven.[18]

§ 15. Associated with Viṣṇu is the concept of divine incarnation. The Rāmāyaṇa records two views on the acquisition of human forms

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1 NW IV, 36, 56.
2 NW V, 44, 22; VI, 37, 134; IV, 61, 18.
3 NW V, 97, 15; VI, 52, 74; IV, 36, 104; VI, 49, 51.
4 NW I, 45, 4; IV, 37, 57; IV, 61, 18.
5 NW VI, 16, 55; V, 97, 15.
6 NW VI, 52, 74; BE VII, 16, 40.
7 NW IV, 61, 89-90; III, 39, 35 ff.
8 NW VI, 104, 14; V, 16, 24; III, 39, 31 ff.
9 NW V, 44, 22.
10 NW II, 104, 16.
11 NW II, 11, 11; 25; 44; III, 36, 9; V, 43, 12; BE I, 29, 4-5.
12 NW I, 41, 13-33; VI, 44, 23; V, 17, 31.
13 NW III, 35, 41; IV, 56, 10; V, 10, 60; V, 16, 29; VI, 7, 13; VI, 34, 39.
14 NW VI, 51, 29.
15 IV, 61, 131-135; V, 55, 1; V, 56, 37-38.
16 BE IV, 39, 6-7.
17 The number of similes occurring in the three recensions (counting the common ones once) can be divided as follows: Indra 214; Viṣṇu 56; Brahmā 28, Rudra 19.
18 NW V, 91, 63-67; VI, 27 19-41; BE VII, 98, 12-49; NW VI, 100, 20-43.

by gods. Firstly, there is the more primitive idea of gods procreating children through human mothers: Pitāmaha, Sahasrāṃśu (sun), Dharma, Anila, Śakra, Aśvins etc., are said to have been the fathers of the chief Vānaras.[1] The other which no doubt has a strong religious basis is that the gods assuming some material form come down to this earth to ensure its well-being. Its religious aspect is clear from the Bhagavadgītā which states, "Whenever there is degeneration of the Dharma and there is exaltation of the Adharma then I myself come forth; for the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers and for the purpose of establishing firmly the Dharma I am born from age to age."[2] As Hopkins has observed the god in the event of incarnation (*Avatāra*) descends expressly to save the world.[3]

§ 16. According to the Vaiṣṇavaite tradition Rāma, the hero of the Rāmāyaṇa is an incarnation of Viṣṇu. The Bālakāṇḍa describes in detail how the gods tormented by Rāvaṇa went in deputation to Brahmā, at whose advice they requested Viṣṇu to assume a human guise because a boon received by Rāvaṇa had made him invulnerable to any being but a man.[4] But from the next kāṇḍa onwards the divine aspect so attributed to Rāma is superseded by a predominantly human character. Barua thinks that Vālmīki "was anxious to represent Rāma more as an ideal man than as a god incarnate; at any rate he emphasized mainly the human side of Rāma's personality. Wherever he had to portray Rāma's character he was careful to safeguard his own position by comparing him and *not identifying* him with all that is known as the most portent among natural forces, nor with the highest in nature."[5] This holds good for the major portion of the epic for the concept of Rāma as an incarnation of Viṣṇu comes to the fore again towards the latter part of the Rāmāyaṇa. But it is not limited to the Bāla and the Uttarakāṇḍas only as is suggested by Hopkins who says, "His Viṣṇu-form is fully recognized only in Bāla and Uttara."[6] for the Yuddhakāṇḍa too represents Rāma as an incarnation of Viṣṇu quite clearly. It is here that Rāvaṇa spoke of Rāma as Viṣṇu and mentioned also his incarnation as Vāmana.[7] There again did Nārada[8] and Daśaratha[9] praise Rāma as god incarnate. And there are many more shorter references to this concept.[10] In the Uttarakāṇḍa the divine aspect of Rāma is mentioned thrice by Brahmā, firstly in praising Rāma,[11] secondly in his message to Rāma,[12] and

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1 NW VI, 6, 19-27; IV, 33, 2.
2 Bhagavadgītā: IV, 7-8.
3 Hopkins: EM p. 210.
4 NW I, Sargas 10 & 11; I, 14, 8-13; I, 15, 1.
5 Barua: *Asu: Muk: Sil: Jub.* III p. 401.
6 Hopkins: EM p. 212.
7 NW VI, 42, 8-23.
8 NW VI, 27, 19-41.
9 NW VI, 100, 20-43.
10 NW VI, 4, 45; VI, 11, 28; VI, 28, 2; VI, 37, 101; VI, 37, 103; VI, 92, 9.
11 BE VII, 98, 12-49.
12 BE VII, 104, 3-15.

finally in welcoming him to Svarga.[1] A clear interpolation is the account of Sāgara addressing Rāma as Viṣṇu, which occurs only in the NW.[2]

§ 17. The Rāmāyaṇa mentions especially in the Yuddhakāṇḍa a number of other Avatāras of Viṣṇu; he is said to have been born with the head of a horse (*aśvavadana*), when he went to the *Pātāla*.[3] Reference is also made to his incarnation as a tortoise when he churned the ocean, as Rāma to deprive the world of the Kṣatriyas,[4] as the man-lion to kill Hiraṇyakaśipu[5] as a boar to rescue the submerged earth,[6] as Vāmana to subdue Bali[7] and as Kṛṣṇa.[8] But nowhere are the ten avatāras enumerated or the "daśa-avatāra" belief referred to in clear terms. It is also worthwhile noting that the Rāmāyaṇa not only gives a unique case of Viṣṇu's incarnation as four individuals (i.e. Rāma and his brothers) at the same time but also records a meeting between two incarnations namely of Rāma Dāśarathi and Rāma Jāmadagni.[9]

§ 18. The distribution of the data on divine incarnations in the epic contradicts the common opinion among scholars that the concept of incarnation is peculiar to the first and the last kāṇḍas only. As such it is not a sound argument to be used in upholding these two kāṇḍas as late. What really has happened is that the whole Rāmāyaṇa at a subsequent period was subject to a Vaiṣṇavaite revision (I § 69) during which the concept of Rāma as Viṣṇu's incarnation was inserted wherever it was found suitable. But there is no doubt that the idea is later than the epic story which represents a human hero in Rāma.

B. Popular Beliefs and Superstitions

§ 19. The ancient Indian as reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa seems to have been more fatalistic in his outlook than his Vedic forebears. If the latter had utmost faith in their gods who were either naturalistic in origin or were social or "chthonic" reflexes, and depended on their good-will for their earthly welfare the Indian of the period depicted by the Rāmāyaṇa appears to have attributed what was unaccountable—especially unexpected calamities—to sheer fate. This concept is essentially popular as none of the important religions or philosophical systems of ancient India uphold it. The causeless fate is in fact alien to them which find the cause of every calamity either in divine displeasure as the Ṛgvedic Aryans did or in the doctrine of Karma as Buddhism and

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1 BE VII, 110, 9-16.
2 NW V, 96, 24 (not BE & GE)
3 NW VI, 98, 42.
4 NW VI, 27, 24.
5 NW VI, 98, 40; VI, 27, 23; BE VII, 6, 34.
6 NW VI. 27, 22.
7 NW VI, 42, 14.
8 NW VI, 27, 27; VI, 98, 24; VI, 98, 27 & 41; BE VII, 8, 12; VII, 53, 20.
9 NW I, 70.

Jainism held. Another proof of the popular origin of the notion of fatalism is that it has certain affinities with the beliefs reflected in the Atharva veda.

§ 20. An important fatalistic view of the Rāmāyaṇa is that of *Kāla*. Though in certain contexts *Kāla* appears to mean "Death", the commoner notion is that it represented the unaccountable agent of distress. Rāma when faced with Kabandha blamed it on *Kāla* which causes even the experienced and strong warriors to sink down in battle like a causeway of sand.[1] Rāvaṇa did not follow the advice of any of his ministers or relations because he was overpowered by *Kāla*[2] which is compared to a noose,[3] fire[4] and a club.[5] The BE and the GE outline the theory of *kāla* in four verses which seek to establish *Kāla* as the fundamental cause of everything in the world. They state, "There is no doer of anything; and in its (i.e. *Kāla's*) command there is no lord. The world (according to GE *Kāla*) resorts to nature, and its sole refuge (*parāyaṇam*) is *Kāla*. *Kāla* does not surpass time and *Kāla* does not decrease. Having attained to nature it does not transgress anything. To *Kāla* there is no relationship, no reason, no valour; it (respects) no friendship nor kinship no cause nor one's control. But the evolution of *Kāla* should be well observed by him who sees. Dharma, Artha and Kāma are all established in the course of *Kāla* (*Kālakrama*)"[6].

§ 21. This short passage is no doubt important because of its close semblance to the hymns on *Kāla* in the Atharvaveda.[7] Winternitz who takes *Kāla* in these hymns to mean "Time" traces in them "the language of the mystic and not of the philosopher."[8] But it appears that the mystic connotation observed in them could be perhaps better explained if *Kāla* is regarded as the popular concept of fate, which the composers of the hymn attempted to elevate to a highly mystical principle. In the Atharva Veda and the Rāmāyaṇa (besides in the other epic) the popular concept of fate is discernible behind the more philosophical or mystic notion of the first principle. It is not altogether wrong to conclude that *Kāla* did not evolve into a purely philosophical concept at any stage of the development of the Indian thought. In the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad I, 2 *Kāla* among others is stated to be one of the definitions of or equivalents for *Brahman*, apparently current among certain thinkers whose views are to be merely taken into consideration (*cintyam*) rather than to be accepted (*kālaḥ svabhāvo niyatir yadṛcchā bhūtāni yoniḥ puruṣa iti cintyam*). It is quite likely that *Kāla*—the first principle—so rejected by

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1 NW III, 76, 42.
2 NW V, 90, 55 & 71; VI, 12, 1; BE VII, 19, 27.
3 NW III, 30, 17; V, 90, 73; VI, 14, 7; VII, 18, 23.
4 NW VI, 46, 34.
5 BE VII, 14, 14.
6 BE IV, 25, 5- 8; GE IV, 24, 5-8. (not NW)
7 Atharva Veda XIX, 53; XIX, 54.
8 Winternitz: ILW I p. 150.

the Upaniṣad is the popular notion of destiny or fate which is not at all in keeping with the doctrine of *Brahman* and *Ātman*.

§ 22. The degeneration of a hierarchical concept is to be observed in the other common term for "fate" in the Rāmāyaṇa, *Daiva*. *Daiva* etymologically would mean "pertaining to the gods", that is, the god's will which in the Ṛgvedic times seems to have been the explanation for both blessings and calamities. In the epic *Daiva* has no connection at all with any god or deity and signifies the same view as *Kāla*[1] as pointed out above. *Daiva* was regarded as something that was beyond man (*mānuṣād anyad daivaṃ*)[2]. It was considered to be unthinkable (*acintyam*)[3], undisputable (*atarkyam*) and indeterminable (*aniśceyam*)[4]. There was none, it was thought, who could override the rule of *Daiva*,[5] "Not even the great beings nor the gods can be redeemed from (the clutches of) *Daiva* which causes the fall of all beings (*sarvabhūtāti-pātinaḥ*."[6] The human endeavour is of no use[7] for *Daiva* cannot be surpassed in any way[8]—not even with valour, wealth, pride and consciousness.[9]

§ 23. It was further believed that both the good and the bad arose from *Daiva*.[10] Rāma says that happiness and sorrow, fear and agitation, profit and loss and existence and non-existence come upon men due to *Daiva*.[11] Everything was brought about and destroyed by it,[12] and nothing is possible without this great and wonderful *Daiva*.[13] It is clear that the popular concept of ancient India was that man proposes, but *Daiva* disposes."[14] The highest position[15] attributed to *Daiva* in popular belief is borne out by a comment in the Uttarakāṇḍa to the effect that, "Rāma who when angry may kill gods, Gandharvas and Rākṣasas adores *Daiva*" (*sa daivaṃ paryupāsate*)[16].

§ 24. On the other hand the epic records also the opposite concept that *Daiva* could be combated by human endeavour and perseverance. It is Lakṣmaṇa who advocates this view when he advises his brother Rāma to assert himself and acquire the kingdom of Ayodhyā by force. "It is the weakling", he says, "who praises *Daiva*[17] and it is the confused man with scanty courage who follows *Daiva*.[18] It is evil to think that one is harassed by *Daiva*,[19] for the glorious man who is not despondent subdues it with effort."[20] So did Rāvaṇa also denounce him who was

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1 NW VI, 91, 24; VI, 76, 3; II, 63, 24; II, 67, 5; VI, 96, 5.
2 NW V, 81, 21. Cf. also IV, 15, 60.
3 NW II, 65, 34; II, 22, 15.
4 NW V, 81, 20.
5 NW V, 81, 20; II, 22, 16 & 20.
6 NW III, 72, 13.
7 NW VI, 81, 162.
8 NW VI, 25, 37; BE VII, 50, 4 & 19.
9 NW VI, 91, 25.
10 NW V, 81, 20.
11 NW II, 22, 17. Cf. I, 54, 25.
12 NW VI, 91, 23.
13 NW V, 81, 23.
14 Cf. NW V, 81, 22.
15 Cf. BE I, 58, 23; NW V, 81, 22.
16 BE VII, 50, 5.
17 NW II, 23, 8.
18 NW II, 23, 19.
19 NW II, 23, 18.
20 NW II, 23, 20 & 9; Cf. NW I, 54, 27.

solely dependent on *Daiva* (*daiva ekaparāyaṇaḥ*)[1] and emphasize that success was attained through the association of *Daiva* with effort.[2]

§ 25. A further view similar to that of *Daiva* is the concept of *Bhāgya* or fortune.[3] As regards the concept of fate the Rāmāyaṇa represents both its popular aspect as well as the didactic attitude to it; but the former is undoubtedly given greater prominence in the epic so much so it can be thought that the didactic verses found their entry into the Rāmāyaṇa at a later date.

§ 26. Besides being fatalistic the ancient Indian believed in omens and portents. *Nimittas*, as they were called, were either favourable[4] or disastrous[5] and those who knew their meaning (*nimittajña* and *nimitta-kovida*)[6] could tell what they foreshadowed. The Rāmāyaṇa deals with numerous situations of doubt and uncertainty and hence many opportunities were found to describe the omens and portents which gave the characters courage or otherwise under these circumstances.

§ 27. Firstly there were omens which were connected with the parts of the body of an individual. The throbbing of the right arm,[7] the right eye,[8] the left thigh[9] and the left breast,[10] along with a golden complexion on the face,[11] was believed to herald happiness, while the throbbing of the left arm, eye[12] and heart,[13] the trembling of the body,[14] the pallid complexion of the face[15] besides the feeling of anxiety and emptiness[16] were signs of impending calamity. The sight of dark and tawny men, deformed with bald heads and protruding teeth[17] and of grinning dark women with white teeth[18] was also regarded unlucky. And women who fainted in sleep[19] were believed to indicate oncoming misery.

§ 28. Secondly, certain natural phenomena adumbrated happiness or calamity. If the winds blew along (i.e. without blowing against) and the directions were clear with a bright sun and if the stars Uśanas, Bhārgava, Maharṣis, Dhruva, Triśaṅku, Rājarṣi and Viśākhas were visible the expedition undertaken would, it was believed, be successful.[20] But if nature manifested a fearful form it heralded loss and failure.[21]

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1 NW V, 77, 11.
2 NW VI, 38, 12. Cf. Didactic literature: "daivaṃ nihatya kuru pauruṣam ātmaśaktyā"—Hitopadeśa, I, v. 31.
3 NW II, 22, 15; VI, 94, 36.
4 NW V, 22, 19; V, 52, 17; V, 71, 4; VI, 73, 29; VI, 87, 34.
5 NW III, 50, 33; III, 64, 11 & 18; III, 65, 18; VI, 11, 24; VI, 44, 45; V, 76, 14.
6 BE VI, 23, 1; NW VI, 87, 35.
7 NW III, 29, 7; V, 23, 3.
8 NW V, 23, 2.
9 NW V, 21, 37; V, 23, 4.
10 NW V, 23, 5.
11 NW V, 23, 5.
12 NW VI, 44, 48; VI, 74, 35; III, 66, 2; III, 67, 1; III, 76, 11.
13 NW III, 66, 2; BE VII, 46, 15.
14 NW VI, 74, 38; BE VII, 46, 14.
15 NW III, 29, 9; VI, 74, 35.
16 BE VII, 46, 15-16.
17 NW VI, 11, 37.
18 NW VI, 11, 32.
19 NW VI, 11, 32.
20 NW V, 71, 44-47.
21 NW III, 28, 1-19.

The earth with its mountains and forests quaked and the seas were agitated.[1] The sun lost its brightness[2] and was seen blue,[3] and it spread its red, yellow and white rays on the fated individual.[4] The day became very hot[5] and the evenings were excessively red either like the red sandalwood or like the hibiscus flower (*japāpuṣpa*).[6] The moon did not approach the constellations as proper to the time (*yathāvat*).[7] The winds blew firecely against the individual carrying along dust.[8] And the directions became dark[9] and covered with dust[10] and resembled a rainy day.[11] The clouds gathered and there was thunder and lightning.[12] When Kumbhakarṇa set out to fight with Rāma there was thunder without rain.[13] As further signs of imminent calamity the ancient Indian seemed to have believed that it rained blood[14] and dust[15] and that meteors fell on the unfortunate person.[16] And it is said that the meteors fell from the disc of the sun (*Maholkāḥ sūryamaṇḍalāt*)[17]. The planets being furious at one another (*Anyonyam abhisaṃrabdhāḥ*) did not shine[18], while the sun, the moon and the constellations quaked with the earth.[19] The Comets (?) also were believed to foreshadow danger and when Rāma marched to the south the constellation of the Rākṣasas was touched by "dhūmaketu."[20]

§ 29. Thirdly, the behaviour of birds and beasts were also interpreted as omens. Among the auspicious signs observed by Rāma in his march against the Rākṣasas is that the birds sang sweetly and the beasts made pleasant noises.[21] There is an instance in the Rāmāyaṇa where the birds and the beasts behaved differently at the same moment. This was when Rāma was challenged by Paraśurāma; and Vasiṣṭha explained this disparity, "The birds indicate an imminent danger while the beasts allay it."[22] The epic gives us mostly the accounts of the conduct of animals, which forecasts misery. The beasts and birds cried fiercely[23] and among the birds whose cries were believed to be unlucky were the vultures, the hawks, the cranes[24], the *Vañjulaka*

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1 NW VI, 16, 4; VI, 44, 46; VI, 74, 33; VI, 82, 64.
2 NW VI, 44, 49; VI, 74, 33; VI, 82, 63.
3 NW VI, 16, 8.
4 NW VI, 87, 25.
5 NW VI, 11, 25.
6 NW VI, 16, 6; VI, 87, 22.
7 NW VI, 16, 9.
8 NW VI, 16, 4; VI, 29, 31; VI, 33, 36; VI, 44, 49; VI, 56, 21; VI, 87, 28.
9 NW VI, 29, 31; VI, 74, 33; VI, 87, 30.
10 NW VI, 11, 27.
11 NW VI, 87, 30.
12 NW VI, 11, 25; VI, 33, 34; VI, 74, 33; VI, 87, 29.
13 NW VI, 44, 46.
14 NW VI, 11, 25; VI, 33, 34; VI, 87, 20.
15 NW VI, 87, 30.
16 NW VI, 33, 36; VI, 44, 49; VI, 74, 37, VI, 87, 23.
17 NW VI, 16, 6.
18 NW VI, 33, 36.
19 NW VI, 53, 26.
20 NW V, 71, 48.
21 NW V, 71, 43. Cf. also NW V, 21, 38.
22 NW I, 70, 10-14.
23 NW V, 39, 3; VI, 16, 7; III, 28, 9; III, 29, 6; VI, 44, 47.
24 NW VI, 29, 32; VI, 87, 27; VI, 16, 10.

birds,[1] the red-footed white pigeons and the *Śārikā* birds which twitter indoors,[2] and the crows.[3] Of the beasts it is the noise of the jackal which heralded calamity.[4] Besides crying, the birds hovered around the chariot of the fated warrior;[5] the vultures vomitting flames flew round the chariot or fell on it or alighted on the flag-staff facing the south.[6] They flew over the city as well and the flocks of crows which gathered together on the top of the houses also were an unlucky omen.[7] Similarly, the red-footed pigeons and *Śārikās* who flew over the hordes of Rākṣasas indicated some forthcoming disaster.[8] The milk of cows trickled down from their udders, the elephants became sober; the horses neighed piteously and did not relish their food.[9] Carnivorous beasts came up to the doors of houses and they ate the flesh of elephants and horses.[10] The rats wandered in confidence on the highways.[11] Asses were born to cows and rats to ichneumons; and cats and pigs were found with tigers and dogs.[12] Besides asses, horses and camels shed their hair and also tears; and they stood simply even when commanded.[13] Further, ants settled on the oblations.[14] The horses who were yoked to the chariot of the unfortunate warrior heralded his downfall by shedding tears[15] and by tumbling down even on level land.[16]

§ 30. Finally, there were omens which cannot be grouped under the above three categories. They are merely some unusual occurrences which seemed to have had special meanings to the anxious observer. Indrajit expected (and of course achieved) victory in battle because the fire rose up to receive his oblation when he performed a sacrifice.[17] On the other hand Vibhīṣaṇa observed that some calamity was imminent because the sacrificial fire when lit up to the accompaniment of hymns did not burn properly, but was covered with smoke.[18] The oblations made in the houses were eaten by *Pretas*[19] and the boys always fought on the highways.[20] The failure of an expedition was believed to be foretold by the dropping of the whip from the charioteer's hand[21] and the falling of the white parasol of authority.[22] Prahasta's fate was indicated by his shadow which became deformed.[23] Another omen

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1 NW III, 76, 13.
2 NW VI, 11, 35-36.
3 BE VII, 6, 58.
4 NW III, 64, 4; VI, 11, 31.
5 NW VI, 87, 31.
6 NW VI, 87, 26; VI, 87, 21; VI, 29, 29; VI, 33, 35.
7 NW V, 76, 20; V, 76, 19.
8 BE VII, 6, 57.
9 NW V, 76, 17.
10 NW V, 76, 21; VI, 11, 38.
11 NW VI, 11, 36.
12 NW VI, 11, 34.
13 NW V, 76, 18.
14 NW V, 76, 16.
15 NW VI, 11, 26; VI, 56, 20; VI, 87, 32.
16 NW VI, 74, 34, VI, 82, 64; VI 33, 37 & 39.
17 NW VI, 53, 23-24.
18 NW V, 76, 15.
19 NW VI, 11, 33.
20 NW VI, 11, 33.
21 NW VI, 33, 38; VI, 56, 19.
22 NW VI, 29, 30.
23 NW VI, 33, 37.

mentioned only in the GE is that Rāma saw that the statues were trembling and laughing.[1]

§ 31. It is interesting to observe that practically all the omens described in the Rāmāyaṇa are current among the Indians and Ceylonese even today with almost the same implications. At the time reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa they appear to have been quite well-established, indicating thereby that they go back to a period anterior to that of the Rāmāyaṇa. Why certain incidents and happenings should be associated with either happiness or calamity is not clear and a proper understanding of this problem is not possible unless a thorough study of the primitive psychology is undertaken; for instance why should the right arm foreshadow happiness when the right thigh denotes misery? And why should a dark woman with white teeth be regarded as unlucky when the woman of those characteristics was regarded as an ideal in the concept of beauty (VI § 3)? The answers for these and many more similar questions can be arrived at only by a complete analysis of the culture of the ancient Indians with due emphasis on the admixture of cultures and the stages of their evolution. Much of these may not be explained with reference to the Aryan culture alone; these beliefs had developed among the common people who readily absorb thoughts and concepts from their neighbours. And linguistic and archaeological researches reveal that many a culture met in India before the time of the epic.

§ 32. It is evident from the Rāmāyaṇa that the ancient Indians believed in dreams as premonitions.[2] There were also experts who could interpret them; thus the dreams of Daśaratha were explained by them as heralding the death of the king or the downfall of the Kingdom.[3] It was apparently the belief that the dreams were only symbolic. The meaning of a dream was arrived at by interpreting the single symbols which due to some reason or other had been associated with certain incidents. A number of these symbols are given in the descriptions of the two dreams in the epic. The first is the dream seen by Bharata at Girivraja at the time of Daśaratha's death. He saw that the moon fell to the earth, the ocean dried up and the sun was eclipsed. His father, dressed in red, was being dragged southwards and there he fell into the lake of *Gomaya* and was drowned. Getting out of it he, draped in black, sat on a black iron chair surrounded by black and brown women and drank oil and water (*tailodaka*) out of his hands. Further, he appeared to be dressed in red and advancing to the south. Fire rose

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1 GE VI, 11, 28.
2 Cf. dreams as omens in the Buddhist Literature e.g. Sutta Nipāta (P.T.S.) p. 181. Dīgha Nikāya I. p. 9. Aṅguttara Nikāya III, p. 240.
3 NW II, 6, 15-18.

from the water; a fettered elephant sank; a great mountain was crushed to bits; a tree fell down and a great flag was fallen.[1] According to the BE Daśaratha moreover, appeared dirty with loosened hair[2] and travelling in a chariot dragged by asses.[3] These were interpreted by Bharata as announcing the death of either Daśaratha or Rāma.[4]

§ 33. The dream seen by Trijaṭā was partly realistic and partly symbolic. She dreamt that Sītā had gone back to Rāma and that she travelled in the Puṣpaka with Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. Sītā was dressed in white with white flowers and had mounted an elephant. She sat on her husband's lap and touched the sun and the moon with her hand. Rāma with Lakṣmaṇa appeared in white—Rāma with eight arms—going about in a chariot drawn by white bulls. Besides, she saw that Rāvaṇa fell from his Puṣpaka and he who was wearing yellow garments and who was full shaven was dragged by a woman. He mounted a camel and set out towards the south. A theatrical performance of the Rākṣasas was also seen wherein they were dressed in red with red garlands. Laṅkā appeared to sink in the sea and the Rākṣasa women drank oil, laughed and danced. All the Rākṣasas were clad in yellow and were sporting in the lake of Gomaya while Vibhīṣaṇa with his four ministers stood on a white mountain. This dream Trijaṭā explained as heralding the reunion of Sītā with Rāma and the destruction of the Rākṣasas.[5]

§ 34. The symbols used in representing the death of Daśaratha are evident. Firstly, there were phenomenal catastrophies depicting probably the magnitude of the calamity. Secondly, the fire which rose from water indicated that it was quite unexpected while the great beings and things which came to destruction also represented the fall of a great man. Besides these the death in both dreams is symbolised with red and yellow garments and red garlands, the lake of *Gomaya* and a journey to the south. The colour red seems to be associated with the custom of having the executioners and the executed adorned with red garlands, just as yellow would have some association with the yellow robe worn by the executioner of ancient India as depicted in the Jātakas.[6] The lake of *Gomaya* (i.e. probably one full of cowdung) was to indicate a filthy and undesirable state while the southern direction is important because of its association with Yama, the god of death (VII § 6). Drinking of oil is a symbol whose explanation is difficult; but we may conjecture that it is based either on the custom of placing dead bodies in troughs of oil (VIII § 134) or on the practice of pouring oil (?) on funeral pyres. A further symbol of misfortune in dreams mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa is the monkey. Sītā on seeing Hanumat thought that it was in a dream and

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1 NW II, 75, 9-17.
2 BE II, 69, 8.
3 BE II, 69, 18.
4 NW II, 75, 18.
5 NW V, 21, 9-35.
6 Mehta: PBI pp. 158-159.

wished for the the safety of Rāma and her father.[1] Here it might have been the ugliness of the animal which made its sight unlucky.

§ 35. Besides omens and dreams other means of ascertaining the future were resorted to. From the Rāmāyaṇa it appears that there were soothsayers who based their predictions either on the bodily characteristics (i.e. *lakṣaṇin*) or on astrology.[2] Brahmans seem to have specialised in this art and we get in the Uttarakāṇḍa references to Brahmans who had foretold the events during Rāma's reign.[3] The bodily characteristics were the factors taken into consideration in predicting the future of Sītā. When she was told that Rāma was killed in battle she wailed, "The soothsayers did tell me in the past that I would never be a widow."[4] They had interpreted lotus-like marks on her sides as indicating the fact that she would be consecrated as an empress along with her husband.[5] There were also further signs which had been regarded by them as lucky. Her hair, eye-brows, shins, teeth, eyes, hands, feet, ankles, nails, fingers, breasts, navel etc., along with her sweet voice, unconfused nature, the flat feet with the twelve characteristics (i.e. according to the commentary, the two soles and the ten toes)[6] were among the marks on which the knowers of a maiden's characteristics (*kanyālakṣaṇinaḥ*) based their prophecy. The belief in such lucky marks is reflected in the Buddhist literature where the Buddha is attributed with no less than thirty-two such major characteristics and eighty minor ones.[7] It is also significant to note that the knowledge of the interpretation of such characteristics is considered to be base (literally animal-like: *tiracchānavijjā*) in the Buddhist works.[8]

§ 36. The references to predictions made astrologically are comparatively few. Once Rāma observed that the Rākṣasas were destined to be destroyed because their *nakṣatra*, namely *Mūla* whose ruling deity is *Nairṛti*, was touched (*spṛṣṭam*) by *dhūmaketu* and because their nakṣatra was oppressed by a planet or planets (*nakṣatre grahapīḍite*).[9] It is not clear what *dhūmaketu* means here (Cf. VII § 28). It may signify either a comet or the planet *Ketu* (Dragon's Tail). According to the text both these alternatives are possible; if the adjective *Mūlavatā* is regarded as qualifying *dhūmaketunā* the allusion is clearly to a comet "with a tail". On the other hand the interpretation of *dhūmaketu* as Dragon's Tail explains how the *nakṣatra* was oppressed by a planet.

§ 37. Again, certain astrological factors are described as foretelling Rāma's victory over Rāvaṇa: according to the NW, Mars (*Aṅgā-*

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1 NW V, 26, 4.
2 NW II, 94, 23; VI, 24, 14; II, 6, 18, & 20; VI, 24, 4.
3 BE VII, 50, 10; VII, 51, 8 ff.
4 NW VI, 24, 4.
5 NW VI, 24, 5.
6 Cf. Commy. on BE VI, 48, 12.
7 Dīgha Nikāya (P.T.S.) II pp. 16-19; I pp. 88 & 105; III pp. 142 ff.
8 Digha Nikāya (P.T.S.) I p. 9.
9 NW V, 71, 48-49.

raka) passed (*ākramya*) the constellation of *Jyeṣṭhā* whose ruling deities were Indra and Agni—the *nakṣatra* of the Kosalas—and also the constellation of Viśākha and stood in the sky (*Kosalānām tu nakṣatram jyeṣṭhām indrāgnidaivatam ākramyāṅgārakas tasthau viśākham api cāmbare*).[1] In the BE the text is altogether different: the name of the *nakṣatra* of the Kosalas is not mentioned by name; but it is implied by the description of its ruling deities as Indra and Agni. According to the BE, the *nakṣatra* of the Kosalas, whose ruling deities were Indra and Agni was clear (*vyaktam*) and Mars having affiicted or surpassed (*ākramya*) the constellation of Viśākha was in the sky.[2] It is difficult to determine which of these texts is correct. But it suffices to note here that these references reveal a high degree of familiarity on the part of the epic poets with the technical terms used in Indian Astrology.

§ 38. A further instance of astrological knowledge is the prediction of Jaṭāyu that Rāvaṇa would come to ruin because he inadvertently abducted Sītā at the unlucky moment (*muhūrta*) of *Vinda* in which both the wealth and its owner are said to fall into disaster.[3] The position of the planets at the time of Rāma's banishment is stated though not clearly. The NW which enumerates the seven planets as Bṛhaspati, Budha, Arka, Indu, Śukra, Aṅgāraka and Rāhu states that they came to *Soma* (quite probably the radical moon).[4] But the BE mentions only Triśaṅku, Aṅgāraka, Bṛhaspati and Budha and says that all the planets came to *Soma*—the moon.[5] What this phenomenon was is not clear from the text or from the commentary which states that planets came to the moon because they moved in regress during the night (*rātrau vakragatyā*).[6] Astronomically such a position of planets is known to be impossible. Hence it is likely that the author sought in this verse to depict a situation of chaos to emphasize the gravity of exiling Rāma rather than to denote an actual occurrence of astrological significance.

§ 39. Astrology was resorted to in fixing auspicious moments for various undertakings. Primarily the day and the *nakṣatra* were taken into consideration.[7] Rāma's wedding was fixed at the *Phalgunī nakṣatra* whose ruling deity is Bhaga on the following day.[8] Daśaratha decided to have Rāma's coronation at the time the moon came to the lunar mansion of *Puṣya* which followed *Magha*;[9] he said, "Today the moon had come to the mansion of *Punarvasu* which is before *Puṣya* and tomorrow it will certainly be in the lunar mansion of *Puṣya*."[10] And its conjunction with the planet Jupiter seems to have been regarded very

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1 NW VI, 83, 30 f.
2 BE VI, 102, 35 f.
3 NW III. 75, 14. But name of *Muhūrta* in GE III, 73, 16.
4 NW II, 44, 10.
5 BE II, 41, 10.
6 Commy. on BE II, 41, 10.
7 NW I, 9, 95; II, 6, 38.
8 NW I, 67, 23; BE I, 72, 13.
9 NW II, 4, 10; II, 5, 26.
10 NW II, 6, 19.

lucky from a comment of Sītā.[1] It was this same *nakṣatra* of *Puṣya* that was chosen to consecrate Rāma after his return from the wars of Laṅkā.[2] The auspicious moment fixed for Rāma's wedding was chosen by him to set out with the Vānara army to attack Laṅkā.[3] These are clear examples to show that the system of astrology followed at the time reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa was based on the lunar system; according to this the conjunction of the moon with the various lunar mansions (*nakṣatra*) of which Phalgunī, Puṣya, Punarvasu, and Hasta[4] are mentioned in the epic is the most important factor.

§ 40. The solar system of zodiacal signs or houses do not find reference in the body of the epic. This is no doubt an important problem in tracing the history of Indian astronomy and shall be dealt with in the relevant section (IX §§ 31 ff.). But the southern recension has an exclusive account of the astrological position at the birth of the heroes. Here the horoscopes of the heroes are given with reference to the solar zodiac. Rāma was born, it is said, on the ninth day of the month of Caitra under the nakṣatra which had *Aditi* as its ruling deity i.e. Punarvasu with the five planets in their own exalted positions (*svoccasaṃstheṣu pañcasu graheṣu*) and with Jupiter and the moon in the *Karkaṭa Lagna*. The commentary explains that the five planets which were exalted were the Sun, Mars, Saturn, Jupiter and Venus which were in the houses of *Meṣa*, *Makara*, *Tulā*, *Karkaṭa* and *Mīna*.[5] Similarly, Bharata is said to have been born with the *Lagna*, Mīna, under Puṣya, while the two sons of Sumitrā i.e. Lakṣmaṇa and Śatrughna had Karkaṭaka as their *Lagna* with *Sārpa* (i.e. *Āśleṣā*) as the Nakṣatra.[6] The fact that such data belong to a later stage of the development of the epic is clear from their absence in the northern recensions. The occurrence of the solar system in a clear interpolation as this indicates that it became known to the society reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa at a much later time and that the lunar system was the system that was in vogue at the period.

C. Oath, Curse and Vow

§ 41. The central theme of the Rāmāyaṇa dwells on the fulfilment of a promise. Daśaratha banished Rāma and abandoned his own life so as to honour a promise made by him to Kaikeyī. And this grave act of Daśaratha was indeed committed in the name of truth. The epic does not give the oath any spiritual or magical significance. It is out and out a question of morality and its fulfilment was sought so as to satisfy one's conscience rather than to avert any evil consequences. A promise as depicted in the Rāmāyaṇa was a word of honour and it was

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1 NW II, 29, 11.
2 NW VI, 109, 63.
3 NW V, 71, 2-3.
4 BE VI, 4, 5.
5 BE I, 18, 8-9 and Commy.
6 BE I, 18, 15.

usual to introduce a promise with an account of the trustworthiness of its maker.[1] Sometimes he swore in the name of truth or on other significant objects. For instance Anaraṇya affirmed the truth of his predictions with the invocation, "If I had been liberal, if I had sacrificed, if my asceticism has been well accomplished and if I had protected my people well then let my word be true."[2] And Hanumat in the BE promised that he would rescue Sītā somehow or other and swore on the mountains Mandara, Malaya, Meru, Dardura and on yams and fruits.[3] This is no doubt the precursor of the practice of modern Indians and Ceylonese of swearing upon things held sacred or dear by them. The custom of making promises in the presence of the fire has been already dealt with (V § 33). The ancient Indian depicted in the Rāmāyaṇa held the fulfilment of promises in high esteem. Daśaratha allowed Rāma to go with Viśvāmitra, though very reluctantly, because he (the king) did not wish to go back on his word.[4] Lakṣmaṇa insisted that Rāma should kill him lest he (Rāma) failed to stick to his oath that he would kill whomever disturbed his conversation with Kāla.[5] And in the GE it is said that the people who went with Bharata to fetch Rāma were sorry that Rāma did not return to Ayodhyā but were pleased about his firmness as regards his promise (*sthirapratijñatvam*).[6]

§ 42. But the curse, on the other hand, was considered to have almost a magical significance. The belief in the efficacy of the curse was dependent on the concept that the word had a benevolent or a malignant influence as desired; this had already characterized the hymns of the Atharvaveda which by the time of the Manusmṛti were permitted to be used as weapons of the Brahmans.[7] And in the Rāmāyaṇa we observe that Brahmans when provoked cursed their opponents. Daśaratha was thus cursed by the ascetic whose son he killed by accident.[8] Kaikeyī was similarly cursed by a Brahman whom she ridiculed for appearing like a fool.[9] And Durvāsa was about to curse Rāma and his whole kingdom because Lakṣmaṇa requested him to wait till Rāma finished his conversation with *Kāla*.[10] Being angry Nimi and Vasiṣṭha cursed each other while for misdemeanour Brahmā himself cursed Kumbhakarṇa.[11]

§ 43. The Uttarakāṇḍa records the procedure generally adopted in cursing. Nalakūbara who was provoked by Rāvaṇa took water in his hand touched (his eyes etc.) or sipped it according to ritual (*upaspṛśya yathāvidhi*) and uttered the curse.[12] The use of water in this connection has been known as late as the seventh century when Bāṇa described how

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1 NW II, 13. 29; BE VII, 96, 23
2 BE VII, 19, 29, Cf. GE III, 23, 7.
3 BE V, 36, 38.
4 NW I, 19, 2.
5 NW VII, 108, 13-16.
6 GE II, 114, 36.
7 Manusmṛti: XI, 33.
8 NW II, 70, 53-55.
9 NW II, 11, 38-40.
10 BE VII, 105, 6-7.
11 NW VI, 38, 14; BE VII, 55, 21; NW VI, 39, 21-24.
12 BE VII, 26, 53-54.

Sarasvatī was cursed by Durvāsas.[1] What exactly the significance of water was is not clear; and as observed by Hopkins who collected data on various rites with water "it is difficult to decide whether the power of water rests in every case on magic or on the feeling that water.....is a natural purifier."[2] The power of the curse was enhanced by the virtues of the one who uttered it; and these virtues were believed to ensure the fruition of a curse; so Tārā tells Rāma that she could curse him by resorting to her virtues of chastity (*pativrataguṇāśrayāt*).[3] And the sages of the Daṇḍaka forest stated that they could have cursed the Rākṣasas, who harassed them, by the power of their asceticism.[4] Attributed to these same sages is the statement that they did not wish to fail in their asceticism (*tapaḥ khaṇḍayitum*) which had been acquired by long practice.[5] This doctrine of the immorality of cursing is no doubt alien to the Brahmanical beliefs represented above (VII § 42). While a Brahman seems to have regarded it quite permissible to curse his enemies and resorted to it at times of anger the ascetics refrained from it as it harmed their asceticism. This is a clear reference to a culture different from that of the Brahmans and it is quite likely that it represented an ascetic ideal which had found its entry to the teachings of the Buddha and Mahāvīra.

§ 44. The curse was believed to be extremely powerful; it was often compared to a raging fire.[6] The legends included in the Rāmāyaṇa narrate various ways in which curses took effect. Due to curses Daṇḍa's kingdom was consumed by fire within seven days,[7] Kumbhakarṇa was made to spend the major part of his life in sleep,[8] Vālin was prevented from entering Ṛṣyamūka forest,[9] Hanumat forgot his own strength,[10] Ahalyā and Rambhā were petrified,[11] Tumbaru became Virādha,[12] Vidyunmālā turned into a *Grāhī* for a hundred years,[13] and Triśaṅku was reduced to the state of a Caṇḍāla.[14] Kalmāṣapāda and Viśvāmitra's sons were cursed to become cannibalistic (V § 5).[15] Further, Rāvaṇa was cursed to die on account of a woman, and for raping an unwilling woman to have his head split into a hundred fragments.[16] Not only were living beings believed to be subject to the crushing power of the curse, even the inanimate objects were also under its sway; for instance, Taṇḍi cursed a forest and it became a desert devoid of rivers, trees, birds and beasts.[17]

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1 Harṣacarita (edited by Kane) p. 3.
2 Hopkins: Pro. Amr. Phil. Soc. XLIX p. 38.
3 NW IV, 16, 38.
4 NW III, 11, 15.
5 NW III, 11, 15.
6 NW II, 69, 40; II, 70, 19.
7 BE VII, 81, 7 ff.
8 NW VI, 38, 47.
9 NW IV, 8, 40.
10 BE VII, 36, 32-42.
11 NW I, 44, 28-33; I, 60, 14-15.
12 NW III, 5. 40-42.
13 NW VI, 81, 84-87.
14 NW I, 54, 9.
15 BE VII, 65, 28; NW I, 58, 17.
16 BE VII, 24, 21-22; VII, 26, 56; VI, 13, 11-14.
17 NW IV, 39, 8-14.

§ 45. It was also believed that an end could be prescribed for each curse. Ahalyā was redeemed of her curse at the sight of Rāma[1] while the crow at Citrakūta was rescued from a curse when Rāma shot it down[2] and Kabandha was released at the sight of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa.[3] But Kalmāṣapāda was to suffer under the spell of Vasiṣṭha's curse for twelve years.[4] Moreover, one who cursed could also revoke it and hence did Rāma invoke Daśaratha to revoke his curse to Kaikeyī.[5]

§ 46. The belief in the efficacy of the curse was entertained by the ancient Indians as it tallied with their fatalistic *weltanschauung* which was strengthened by the relevant interpretation they gave to the doctrine of Karma and by the fact that they were only too ready to accept what was supernatural. Their psychology was no doubt similar to that of the modern villager of India and Ceylon, whose faith in curses is occasionally consolidated by certain coincidences.

§ 47. The ancient Indians believed in vows as well. The vow unlike the oath and the curse has a religious significance (VII §§ 41 ff.). It is induced by the faith the devotee has in the power of the deity. Its main difference from worship is that the devotee attempted to strike a bargain with the deity; for instance, Sītā promised to give away a hundred thousand cows to Brahmans on condition that Gaṅgā protected her and her relations during the period of exile.[6] Her vows to Kālindī and the Banyan tree Śyāma were for the same purpose.[7] The practice of taking vows at times of difficulty might have probably been a popular adaptation of the old Vedic doctrine of "*Do, ut des*", which characterized the sacrifices of the Vedic Aryans.[8] The most remarkable difference between the two practices is that the Vedic Aryan offered his hymns and oblations and expected rewards from the deity in return while the vow implied that the god should first fulfil the wishes of the devotee and then expect the reward promised to him. This is a genuine characteristic of popular belief.

§ 48. Finally, we may observe another type of vows wherein the devotee solicited certain favours from the deity on account of his or her special virtues. Herein the emphasis was laid on the truth of the statement the power of which compelled the gods to comply with the devotee's request. This practice is generally called *Satyagraha* and it is noteworthy that this term is not found in the Rāmāyaṇa in spite of the references to the prevalence of its application. The hermit whose son Daśaratha killed prayed that his son should go to the world of the warriors (i.e. that of Indra) on account of the truth (*tena satyena*) of the statement that

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1 NW I, 45, 11-23.
2 NW V, 35, 34.
3 NW III, 77, 19-21.
4 BE VII, 65, 36.
5 NW VI, 100, 35-37.
6 NW II, 56, 20.
7 BE II, 55, 19-20; 24-25.
8 Cf. Winternitz: ILW I p. 80.

he who was sinless was killed by an evil-doer.[1] So did Sītā enter the fire after invoking it to be cool so as to testify to the truth of her statement that she had entertained no man but Rāma.[2] And through a similar *Satyagraha*, according to the Uttarakāṇḍa, she entered the bosom of Mother Earth.[3] The prevalence of such vows in ancient India is amply proved by the Buddhist texts wherein certain passages of the Buddha's preachings are repeated with the invocation that through the truth of these statements blessings should come upon the reciter. (Cf. *etena saccena suvatthi hotu*—let there be bliss through this truth).[4] In the popular parts of the Pali literature this institution is referred to as *saccakiriya*.[5]

D. Magic and the Supernatural

§ 49. The antiquity of magic in India is well borne out by the Atharva Veda which as Winternitz has argued may contain material of a period anterior to that of the Ṛgveda.[6] It is an established fact that magic which represents a more primitive mode of thinking should precede the hierarchic religion. But in no culture is magic altogether given up in preference to the priestly religion. As the latter develops the former is relegated to the background but its influence on the people does continue to exist even though in a less prominent form. The Rāmāyaṇa depicts the prevalence of this stage. As such only a few direct references to magical practices are found in the epic.

§ 50. It appears that charms or incantations were used in ancient India for the purpose of enhancing the efficacy of medicine; Bṛhaspati is said to cure diseases with herbs (*oṣadhi*) which have been charmed with divine incantations.[7] A simile states that serpents were subdued with herbs accompanied by incantations.[8] Herbs were used also as talismans. When Rāma was to leave Ayodhyā for the Daṇḍaka forest his mother tied on his right hand some herb (*oṣadhi*)—which Dharma takes as a root[9]—so that he would be safe from the wiles of the Rākṣasas.[10] The BE gives as the special use of the talisman its ability to make the wearer safe from arrows (*viśalyakaraṇi*).[11] In the Uttarakāṇḍa is described a similar practice of ensuring the safety of Sītā's children by means of a rite performed by Vālmīki with a handful of Kuśa grass and some nutmeg (*lava*). And this was supposed to destroy all malevolent beings (*bhūta-vināśinīm*).[12] Further, in battle, charms were used; for instance, Rāma's

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1 BE II, 64, 40.
2 NW VI, 97, 24-29; VI, 98, 2.
3 BE VII, 97, 14-16.
4 Cf. Khuddaka Pāṭha: (P.T.S.) pp. 3-6, Ratana Sutta.
5 Cf. Fausboll: Jātaka: I, 214, 294; IV, 31, 142; V, 94.
6 Winternitz: ILW I p. 127.
7 NW VI, 27, 3.
8 NW III, 35, 9.
9 Dharma, PO II p. 121.
10 NW II, 28, 19.
11 BE II, 25, 38.
12 BE VII, 66, 3 & 6.

arrows were charmed with incarnations (*divyamantrābhimantritam*)[1] and he uttered charms (*mantrān abhijapan*) while fighting.[2] It is, however, not certain whether the *mantra* in the latter case refers to Vedic hymns as invocations to gods rather than to magical incantations.

§ 51. There appears to have existed some magical associations with certain symbols. The sign of *svastika* was regarded as specially lucky. The boats in which Rāma crossed the Ganges at Śṛṅgaverapura was painted with *svastikas;*[3] so did Laṅkā have the symbols of the lotus and the *svastika* apparently on her flags.[4] And when Hanumat leapt over to Laṅkā the mountain Mahendra appeared to be adorned with the signs of the lotus and the *svastika.*[5] Further, it appears that the panegyrists of Rāma had *svastikas* in their hands (*svastikapāṇibhiḥ*) when they recited the benedictions to bring luck to Rāma.[6] The pitchers full of water were used not only as a form of decoration but also as an auspicious symbol, representing a type of sympathetic magic (III § 12).[7] A similar means of bringing about luck is to be observed in the practice of getting cows, girls, Brahmans, and men with sweetmeats in their hands to meet the person for whom the blessings are sought.[8] It is interesting to notice that all these magical rites in the epic are associated with the Kṣatriyas. Their predilection for such practices has been already made clear by the Atharva Veda which gives a special series of magical practices for the use of kings (*rājakarmāṇi*).[9]

§ 52. Though the references to magic in the epic are few its influence on rites of the hierarchic religion is notable. It has been argued by Keith that the Vedic sacrifices have as their fundamental basis some magical trends.[10] So also is it possible to trace its influence on certain socio-religious ceremonies like those of marriage, funeral and royal consecration as we shall later show in the relevant sections.

§ 53. The imagination of the ancient Indian from the early days of the ṚgVeda has urged him to take an interest in the supernatural. It has been a significant characteristic of the Indian mind and it has exercised a strong influence on their religion and mythology. The numerous legends about divine and semi-divine beings, besides the creations of numerous demi-gods, and beings (VII §§ 11 ff.) and the personalities conferred on their gods are all results of this penchant of the Indian mind for the marvellous. Therefore it is not at all surprising if the Rāmāyaṇa very often attempts to emphasize the supernatural either in the course of the story or in descriptions. Vaidya even found in this tendency a cause for the inclusion of certain interpolations to the Rāmāyaṇa (I § 69).

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1 NW VI, 46, 142.
2 NW VI, 78, 69.
3 NW II, 101, 17.
4 NW V, 2, 23.
5 NW IV, 61, 11.
6 NW VI, 109, 40.
7 NW II, 16, 7.
8 NW VI, 109, 41.
9 Cf. Winternitz: JLW I p. 146.
10 Keith: HOS XXXII pp. 454-455

The character of the Vānaras and the Rākṣasas, their towns and buildings and their deeds were made to appear as wonderful and as unrealistic as it was possible. It is interesting that realism in literature had not been appreciated or desired in the ancient works. Even the human heroes whose deeds sound somewhat realistic have been given a supernatural tinge by attributing to them the use of divine weapons and by associating them with the gods. The Rāmāyaṇa as such reveals an important aspect of the ancient Indian mind.

§ 54. The epic further helps us to outline what their imagination conceived as supernatural. *Firstly*, they subscribed to the concept of *Māyā*, supernatural power. This was regarded mainly as a power of the Rākṣasas.[1] Through it one could change one's form. Rāvaṇa entered the hermitage of Rāma in the guise of a sage[2] while Marīca lured Rāma by acquiring the form of a deer.[3] Rāma further attributed to Rāvaṇa the capacity of changing his form when he said, "Even if you acquire the form of a swift bird and enter the worlds, you shall not, having come within my sight, escape alive."[4] *Māyā* helped the Rākṣasa warriors to fight unseen.[5] Indra could deceive the Rākṣasīs who guarded Sītā through his *Māyā*.[6] The Rākṣasas, through it, presented various spectacles such as the death of Sītā,[7] and created destructive forms and animals.[8] These supernatural powers highlighted the battles of Laṅkā[9] and naturally appealed to the imagination of both the bards and their audiences.

§ 55. *Secondly*, the ancient Indians believed in divine boons. Rāvaṇa is said to have obtained a boon from Brahmā to the effect that no being other than a man could kill him in battle.[10] Besides, saintly people could demand material benefits from gods and this was done by Bharadvāja to offer a fitting welcome to Bharata and his party.[11] The legends of the Uttarakāṇḍa contain a number of allusions to such boons.[12] It is quite likely that this concept was moulded on the practice of bestowing boons by powerful people in actual society; a significant point in the story of Rāmāyaṇa is the boon offered to Kaikeyī by Daśaratha.[13] Another aspect of the belief in divine gifts is that the warriors were provided with powerful weapons by the gods whose names were applied to them.[14] The faith the ancient Indians generally

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1 NW VI, 48, 11; VI, 54, 107; BE VII, 1, 27.
2 NW III, 51, 2.
3 NW II, 48, 1-4.
4 NW VI, 16, 65. Cf, NW VI. 85, 18.
5 NW VI, 22, 8; VI, 24, 18.
6 NW III, 63, 14.
7 NW VI, 59, 5 ff.
8 BE VII, 15, 30-31.
9 NW VI Sargas 20, 21 & 22; VI, 37, 72-80. Cf. also NW I, 28, 8; BE I, 26, 16 & 19.
10 NW VI, 73, 30. Cf. NW VI, 41, 45.
11 NW II, 104, 10-22.
12 BE VII, 10, 13-26; VII, 3. 14-15; BE VII, 18, 22-33.
13 NW II, 13. Cf. NW I, 35, 12.
14 NW II, 16, 30-17; II, 68, 13; BE I, 27,22,

had in their gods as destroyers of evil and as warriors against the Asuras might have been probably the basis on which this belief was founded.

§ 56. *Thirdly*, they considered that miracles were associated with certain earthly incidents in which great men and women were implicated. Thus when Sītā was born there was a shower of flowers.[1] And so was it when Vibhīṣaṇa was born.[2] But when Rāvaṇa was born the earth quaked, meteors fell, the seas rose in storm and it rained blood—all implying that Rāvaṇa was to bring misery to the world.[3] When Daśaratha permitted Rāma to go with Viśvāmitra there blew a gentle breeze and it rained flowers;[4] and similar miracles took place when Rāma killed Śambūka.[5] Thus nature through miracles sympathised with great and virtuous individuals, and whenever it was necessary it helped them. When Rāma left Ayodhyā the earth quaked, the sun disappeared, the planets lost their lustre, the elephants abandoned food and the cows refused to suckle their young.[6] And it sympathised with Sītā when she was being abducted.[7] The forests favoured Rāma by putting forth flowers and fruit out of season[8] while the ground around Bharadvāja's hermitage for five *yojanas* was levelled for the benefit of Bharata's party.[9] Though it is not clearly stated, it is probable that gods were supposed to be the agents who wrought these miracles; for they are represented as rejoicing over certain deeds of men. The gods along with other beings were delighted by the defeat of Rāvaṇa.[10] It was also believed that they honoured virtuous men; they adored Śarabhaṅga in his hermitage[11] and when Rāma died the gods with Brahmā came with their Vimānas to welcome him to *svarga*.[12] It is worthwhile noting also that similar miracles are described in the Buddhist texts[13], showing thus the prevalence of this concept in the eastern part of India.

§ 57. *Fourthly*, it was believed that spirits could take possession of human beings; an unnatural behaviour on the part of a normally kind and considerate person, it appears, was explained as due to a malignant spirit taking possession of him.[14] This concept finds reference in the Buddhist and the Jain texts, too.[15] Besides, there was the belief that spirits haunted certain places; an *Apsaras* named Vidyunmālā was the *grāhī* of the Mahodaya peak.[16] And according to the BE Laṅkā was represented by a female ascetic Laṅkā whom Hanumat struck before

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1 NW III, 2, 17.
2 BE VII, 9, 36
3 BE VII 9, 30-33.
4 BE I, 22, 4-5.
5 BE VII, 76, 6.
6 NW II, 44, 8-13.
7 NW III, 58, 31-39.
8 NW II, 49, 12.
9 NW II. 104, 29.
10 NW VI, 90, 27-30.
11 NW III, 6, 4-8.
12 BE VII, 110, 4-7.
13 Dīgha Nikāya (P.T,S.) II pp. 156 & 160; Jātaka I pp. 51 & 53.
14 NW II, 36 11-12; II, 64, 1; II, 62, 34.
15 Jain: LIJC p. 224 and Saṃyutta Nikāya (P.T.S.) I p. 62. Cf. Wijesekera: UCR III, i pp. 73-107.
16 NW VI, 81, 78.

entering the city.[1] The houses were believed to be haunted by gods as long as the people lived and when they were abandoned the gods too deserted them.[2]

§ 58. *Finally*, we may examine some miscellaneous beliefs which were current among the ancient Indians. The views regarding unnatural conception and birth have already been mentioned (VI § 8). Besides these there are references to a few cases which come more within the category of supernatural occurrences rather than of freaks. The sixty-thousand sons of Sagara were born as a result of the splitting of a gourd (*tumba*) to which their mother gave birth.[3] A legend narrates that Sugrīva's mother was born out of the dust from the eye of Prajāpati.[4] Similarly, Kuśadhvaja produced Vedavatī out of the Vedic texts he uttered (*sambhūtā vāṅmayī kanyā*).[5] The Indians of the olden days believed also in unusually long spans of life for human beings; in the Rāmāyaṇa references are made to such long lives especially in the legends which are inserted in the epic later. Sagara is said to have lived for thirty thousand years[6] while Rāma's reign is regarded to have covered ten thousand years,[7] and the Brahman boy who died on account of Śambūka's asceticism is called a child of a five thousand years (of course, the commentary attempts to make it realistic by taking *varṣa* to mean days).[8] Sages were known to be omniscient; Nārada knew the three periods (*kālatrayajñaḥ*)[9] and he could also fly in the sky and go anywhere he wished.[10] And Virādha, too, had the power to travel through air.[11] Further, there was the belief that divine voices could be heard[12] and that dead people could return to the earth in their divine form as Daśaratha and the hermit boy did.[13]

§ 59. The data presented in this Chapter are extremely important in so far as they reveal the mind of the people at large. The identical cases recorded in the Buddhist and Jain works besides in the other epic prove that in spite of the changes brought about in the hierarchic religion due to various sects and schools the Indian thought had basically remained the same. The religious and the philosophical systems were essentiaily superstructures built on this and it is this foundation which had given Indian religions and philosophies their special character which is common to all of them. This also explains the attitude of the modern Indian to life. What is held as superstitious in his case are actually not the creations of his ignorance. They have been handed over from generation to generation—and the Rāmāyaṇa vouches for their antiquity—so that to go against them is a matter of utmost difficulty.

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1 BE V, 3, 21-48.
2 NW II, 36, 22.
3 NW I, 35, 17.
4 NW VI, 4, 29-56.
5 BE VII, 17, 9.
6 NW I, 38, 27.
7 BE VII, 102, 16.
8 BE VII, 73, 5.
9 NW I, 1, 9. Cf. also NW IV, 54, 4; IV, 55, 15.
10 BE VII, 20, 1 ff.
11 NW III, 5, 15.
12 NW III, 2, 11-13; 17.
13 NW VI, 100, 10 ff; BE II, 64, 47-50.

CHAPTER VIII

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

A. Philosophical Views

§ 1. The study of the philosophical data of the Rāmāyaṇa is extremely difficult as the references are so few and they occur in complicated contexts. It may at the very outset be observed that the Rāmāyaṇa has no particular sections devoted to philosophical speculation as is the case with the Mahābhārata; there are no parts of the epic which could be compared to the Bhagavadgītā or the Anugītā. On the other hand most of the philosophical views are included either in conversations or in similes. Whatever information is gleanable from the epic would serve only one purpose, namely, to trace the spread of certain philosophical systems.

§ 2. The ancient Indian had had by the time of the Rāmāyaṇa a number of philosophical schools which represented a long tradition of speculation. From the Ṛg Veda it is quite evident that certain trends in the Indian philosophy are of great antiquity. Although the classical systems were formulated much later their growth dates from almost the time of the Vedas, at least from the era of the Upanisads. As such it is not surprising that the Rāmāyaṇa makes mention of certain teachings of these systems. But it is apparent that they were given a new interpretation occasionally; this is only natural when the epic makes no claim to deal with philosophical themes and when they are used in similes wherein the idea implied in the object of comparison also gives them a different import.

§ 3. A knowledge of philosophy was essential for a ruler for it is sta ted in the advice given to Rāma on the eve of his consecration that he should rule over the people through the knowledge of the empirical as well as what is beyond it (*parokṣayāpi sambuddhyā rāma pratyakṣayā tathā*).[1] Even if the knowledge of the empirical does not include philosophy the term *Parokṣā* signifies such speculation, for the *Parokṣā* is the keynote of practically all the most important philosophical systems of India. And according to the GE Bharata was expected to study philosophy during his stay in Girivraja; and it is called *jñānatattvārtha*.[2] Accordingly, he was educated in the Āgamas which were most probably the philosophical texts.[3]

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1 NW II, 5, 29. 2 GE I, 80, 13-16. 3 GE I, 80, 17

§ 4. There is only one statement in the Rāmāyaṇa against philosophical speculation; Rāma is stated to have asked Bharata whether any men of low intelligence did not refute the other leading Śātsras (which are regarded by Radhakrishnan as Dharmaśāstras)[1] by resorting to the knowledge of philosophy (*buddhim ānvīkṣikīm*).[2] The derogatory sense attached to *Ānvīkṣikī* is no doubt interesting because it is the standard term for philosophical speculation and signifies the exact attitude of Indian philosophy.[3] Its criticism, therefore, must necessarily come from a quarter whose position was jeopardized by the prevalence of the philosophical teachings. As Manusmṛti clearly indicates they are the Brahmans who saw that their scriptures were open to criticism.[4] This statement, however, does not form a genuine part of the Rāmāyaṇa for it occurs among the numerous questions asked by Rāma in a later portion called the *Kaccit* section; the fact that the long questionnaire was uncalled for on the occasion of Bharata's visit has been taken into consideration in regarding it as an interpolation.

§ 5. But the Rāmāyaṇa is definitely not in favour of the materialistic doctrines such as the argument that the empirical alone mattered while the *Parokṣā* could be relegated to the backgrounds[5] and that death ended one's obligations to his elders.[6] These are put in the mouth of Jābāli who was attempting in vain to convince that Rāma should return to Ayodhyā. Rāma vehemently criticized him saying that his teachings were nihilistic (*nāstikavākya*).[7] This statement of Rāma is to be regarded as representing the general view against materialism. It is, as considered by Barua, the feeling of the poet, who "had no patience with the views of speculative philosophy, which were far remote from common sentiments of mankind and which discredited by sophistry and false logic all established social and religious institutions based upon common sense."[8] Yet the Rāmāyaṇa does not specifically discourage philosophical speculation. If it did so we could not have observed that certain results of such speculations are freely used in the epic.

§ 6. Before we take into consideration the views which can be grouped with those of the recognized systems we may mention a few stray thoughts which cannot be so classed. The BE refers to the popular view of all Indian systems that the conditions in the world had suffering as their substratum.[9] The beings are subject to three pairs of sorrowful conditions, which were inevitable (*trīṇi dvandvāni*).[10] These are explained by Tīrtha as hunger and thirst, sorrow and delusion, decay and death, or birth and death, happiness and sorrow and gain and loss,

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1 Radhakrishnan: IPR II p. 18.
2 NW II, 114, 31.
3 Heimann: IWP p. 27.
4 Manusmrti: II, 11.
5 NW II, 121, 16.
6 NW II, 121, 11-14.
7 NW II, 121, 17-18.
8 Barua: *Asu: Muk: Sil: Jub:* III p. 411.
9 BE II, 78, 2.
10 BE II, 77, 23.

while Kaṭaka takes them to be existence, origin, growth, decay, evolution, and destruction (*asti, jāyate, vardhate apakṣīyate, vipariṇamate, vinaśyati*)[1]. It is Jābāli, again, who expounds that man is not dependent on anyone because he is born alone and he dies alone.[2] This, however, cannot be regarded as a serious philosophical conviction unless it implies that the sole responsibility for the life and after of an individual devolved on the individual himself, thus supporting the Buddhist view that one could seek refuge in one's self only, (*attāhi attano nātho*).[3] Reference is also made to the doctrine that the mind was the cause and the controller of every sensation; "Mind causes all sense-organs to resort to situations which are both pleasant and unpleasant."[4]

§ 7. The Rāmāyaṇa evinces its familiarity with the Vedānta system which is mentioned in the Bālakāṇḍa by name.[5] Besides, the Brahmanical priests of Ayodhyā are often described as knowers or professors of *Brahman* (*brahmavid* or *brahmavādin*).[6] It is, however, not possible to ascertain whether the Vedānta mentioned here was the Upaniṣadic philosophy or the classical system; and it may be noted that the Upaniṣads are also referred to in the epic.[7]

§ 8. The highest principle of the Upaniṣads, *Brahman*, is described in the Rāmāyaṇa as immutable and peerless (*avyayam anuttamam*)[8] undeluded (*asammoha*), beneficial to all beings (*adrohaḥ sarvabhūtānām*) free of all signs of sin (*apakalmaṣa saṃjñitaḥ*)[9], eternal (*Śāśvatam*),[10] imperishable and real (*akṣaram. . . .satyaṃ*)[11], concealed and ancient (*guhyam, sanātanam*), immortal (*amṛtam*)[12] and as the *Paramātman*.[13] And in the BE it is said to be *one*, unthinkable, unmanifest and endless (*acintyam avyaktam anantam ekam*).[14] Further, in a statement extolling truth, *satya* is upheld as the First Principle out of which came Soma and from it the immortal *Brahman*.[15] Besides the neuter principle of *Brahman* the epic mentions the personal god Brahmā as eternal, imperishable and immutable (*śāśvato, thākṣayo, vyayaḥ*)[16] and engaged in the creation of the world.[17] Moreover, the concept of a personal god in Brahmā is represented in the postulation of a world of Brahmā (*Brāhmam*) among the world's conquered by Śarabhaṅga through his asceticism.[18] The Rāmāyaṇa, also, depicts a stage when *Brahman* was conceived somewhat differently from the Upaniṣadic point of view. The impersonal neuter principle and the personal deity merge in a manner least adumb-

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1 Cf. Commy. on BE II, 77, 23.
2 NW II, 121, 3.
3 Dhammapada: verse 160.
4 NW V, 6, 44.
5 NW I, 8, 15.
6 NW II, 37, 19-29; I, 46, 15; I, 54, 2; III, 4, 13; I, 61, 20; I, 49, 8; BE III, 1, 9.
7 NW V, 91, 66.
8 NW I, 61, 16 (not BE).
9 NW I, 61, 15 (not BE).
10 NW I, 108, 44.
11 NW VI, 98, 25.
12 NW VI, 100, 43.
13 NW VI, 98, 44 (not BE).
14 BE V, 54, 37.
15 NW II, 65, 12-15.
16 NW II, 123, 5.
17 NW II, 123, 3-5.
18 NW III, 6, 25.

rated by the Upaniṣads. The epithets of *Brahman* given by Viśvāmitra in the Bālakāṇḍa indicates this confusion clearly; the adjectives in the neuter and the masculine genders in addition to the intervention of Brahmā himself as praising Brahman[1] represent no doubt a high degree of uncertainty as regards the problem. The fact that the Rāmāyaṇa did not distinguish *Brahman* as an all-pervading principle as taught in the Upaniṣads is again proved by the identification of *Brahman*, defined in the attributes of the Supreme, with personal gods; for instance Viṣṇu was considered not only the highest liberation (*paro mokṣaḥ*) but also the *Paramātman*.[2] And Rāma as an incarnation of Viṣṇu is identified with the Supreme;[3] and according to the BE even Hanumat was suspected in Laṅkā to be the Highest which had come down through its *māyā* (*svamāyā*)[4]—a term which is of no mean importance in the Upaniṣads and in the Vedānta. Moreover, it should be remembered that the specific attributes of the Upaniṣadic impersonal *Brahman*, to wit, *neti-neti*, *sarvatatam*, etc. are not cited in the epic.

§ 9. The concept of *Brahman* in the epic may be explained in two ways: firstly, the thought represented therein may belong to the last stratum of the Upaniṣadic teachings, wherein the theistic element was predominant and wherein attempts to reconcile the monistic Supreme with personal gods were made. The epic views come within this level and the more advanced stage of Śaṅkara's theory that *Brahman* could be conceived in two aspects, the *nirguṇa* and the *saguṇa*. The epic appears to be nearer the idea of *saguṇa Brahman* than the theistic Upaniṣads. Secondly, the attitude of the Rāmāyaṇa to *Brahman* may be compared with that of the Buddhist Canon. Here too is reflected a confusion as regards the super-personal concept of the Upaniṣadic *Brahman* and that of the god *Brahmā* and as a result of it the latter appears to be more pronounced.[5]

§ 10. As a reason for this in the Buddhist Canon one may suggest that the Buddha and his disciples, whose speeches and discourses are recorded in the Canon, were not quite familiar with the main Upaniṣadic teachings. If it was so, is it possible that the Rāmāyaṇa, too, did not know sufficiently well the doctrines of the Upaniṣads? Unlike the Buddhist Suttas the Rāmāyaṇa contains clear evidences to prove its knowledge of the Upaniṣads (VIII § 7). As such we may conclude that the epic represents the concept of *Brahman* at a stage when theism was gaining ground; this means that we may date the philosophy of the epic to the period between the latest theistic Upaniṣads and Śaṅkara. But there is no necessity for us to explain the philosophical verses as later interpolations because they may be regarded as depicting the thought

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1 NW I, 61, 15-18.
2 NW VI, 98, 44.
3 NW VI, 98, 25.
4 BE V, 54, 37.
5 Cf. Digha Nikāya (P.T.S.) I, p. 18; I, pp. 22f; I, p. 247.

of the third or the second century B.C., which is the period of the composition of the earlier parts of the Rāmāyaṇa. (I §§ 84-85).

§ 11. Another view which is related to the Vedānta system is that of Ātman which is referred to as *Antarātman*[1] and in the BE as *Pratyag ātman*.[2] The Uttarakāṇḍa in a simile calls it *dehī* and refers to its leaving the body (*dehī deham iva tyajan*).[3] In another simile the imperceptibility of Ātman is stated; the Rākṣasas did not see Rāma who was attacking them just as the people (do not perceive) the individual soul (*Bhūtātman*)[4] which dwells in sense objects (*indriyārtheṣu vartantam bhūtātmānam iva prajāḥ*).[5] Ātman was further thought to be located in the heart and to be aware of the good and the bad, (*hṛdisthaḥ sarvabhūtānāṃ ātmā veda śubhāśubham*).[6] A similar statement regarding the *Ātman*, (though different in the actual concept of the Ātman) is to be found in the Aṅguttara Nikāya, where it is said that one's Ātman (quite likely the conscience) knows if it is true or false (*Attā te puriṣa jānāti saccaṃ vā yadi vā musā*).[7] A further parallel with Buddhist thought is the reference to this life as *Ātmabhāva* in the BE[8]; this term is consistently used in the Buddhist Canon to mean the same.[9]

§ 12. Besides these, the epic records the view that the purity of the individual soul was desirable; Sītā told Hanumat that she would gain reunion with her husband because her *Antarātman* was pure and as there were many qualities in it (*antarātmā hi me śuddhas tasmiṃs ca bahavo guṇāḥ*).[10] Finally, we have an allusion to the Vedānta theory of emancipation through reabsorption into *Brahman*; the sages in the Daṇḍakāraṇya were great intellectuals who had become *Brahman* (*Brahmabhūtā*).[11] The term is specially significant because it upholds the Vedānta view of eternal oneness of the individual soul and Brahman as opposed to the inchoative form *Brahmībhūta* which indicates that the soul which became Brahman was not identical with that before. These concepts on the Ātman and liberation do not vary much from the Upaniṣads. In fact, they, unlike the theory of *Brahman*, remained almost static in the development of the system. As such there can be no objection to our observation, based on the development of the *Brahman concept*, that the Vedānta of the Rāmāyaṇa belongs to the third or the second century B.C. (VIII § 10).

§ 13. The Sāṅkhya and the Yoga systems had found special treatment in the Mahābhārata which mentions some very important stages of their development.[12] In the Bhagavadgītā these two terms

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1 NW II, 6, 42; V, 34, 14; BE VII 87, 22.
2 BE II, 109, 19.
3 BE VII, 40, 30.
4 Cf. Monier-Williams: *Skt-Eng. Dict.* s.v. p. 762.
5 NW VI, 72, 21.
6 NW IV, 14, 7.
7 Aṅguttara Nikāya (P.T.S.) I p. 57.
8 BE II, 64, 74.
9 Wijesekera: Siddhabhārati II p. 115 *et. seq.*
10 NW V, 34, 14.
11 NW III, 4, 8.
12 Cf. Hopkins: GEI p. 97 ff.

are used loosely to represent all philosophical notions and religious practices.[1] They are undoubtedly among the oldest of the philosophical systems of India and their antiquity is sufficiently attested by the influence exercised by them on Buddhism.[2] Still, the Rāmāyaṇa does not give us anything but a few comments on these systems. They along with the Upaniṣads are mentioned in the NW as extolling Viṣṇu: "Viṣṇu is the great *Puruṣa*, who is praised by the gods with Yoga, Sāṅkhya and Upaniṣads."[3]

§ 14. A few Sāṅkhya terms occur in the epic; but they give us no idea whatsoever of the development of the system. Daśaratha, who advised Rāma on the eve of his coronation, told him that he should rule over the people having seen the great *Prakṛti* (*paramāṃ prakṛtiṃ dṛṣṭvā*)[4] and by being free of egotism and mineness (*nirmamo nirahaṅkāraḥ*) possessed of *guṇas* or qualities.[5] As this advice begins with the suggestion that Rāma should view the world from the philosophical angle (VIII § 3) we may take the terms *Prakṛti* and *Guṇa* to signify the Sāṅkhya concepts of the evolving matter and the three qualities of goodness, activity and inertia. The dualistic principles *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* are both severally identified with Viṣṇu quite strangely in the same passage, which, however, appears to be an interpolation because of the divergences of the recensions; the southern recension omits these verses altogether while the Bengali recension identifies Viṣṇu only with *Prakṛti*.[6]

§ 15. The identification of the dualistic principles with a personal god is alien to the concepts of the classical Śāṅkhya system which is for all intents and purposes atheistic; and the Rāmāyaṇa in a rather ambiguous passage states that the *puruṣa* is without a lord (*anīśvaraḥ*).[7] But the interpretation which suits the context best is that *man* is helpless; for Rāma's statement on hearing the news of his father's death can be, "This man is helpless and is unable to do what he desires. While he moves about death drags him." A very important verse in the Rāmāyaṇa clearly shows that in spite of the Sāṅkhya predilection for atheism the epic insists on identifying *Puruṣa* with Viṣṇu; Kausalyā is said to have meditated on the *Puruṣa* who was Janārdana (*puruṣam dhyāyantī sā janārdanam*).[8] The identification of *Puruṣa* with a personal god is again a significant difference from the classical system because the god admitted in the Sāṅkhya is "an emergent īśvara previously absorbed in Prakṛti"[9] (*prakṛtilīnasya janyeśvarasya siddhiḥ*).[10]

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1 Bhagavadgītā: II, 39; III, 3. Cf. Radhakrishnan: BG p. 115.
2 Cf. Keith: Sāṅkhya System (The heritage of India Series 1949 pp. 26 ff.
3 NW V, 91, 66 (not BE & GE)
4 NW II, 5, 29.
5 NW II, 5, 30. Cf. Bhagavadgītā II, 71.
6 NW VI, 98, 40 (not BE and GE); VI, 98, 45 (not BE).
7 NW II, 119, 2.
8 NW II, 6, 32.
9 Radhakrishnan: IPR II, p, 318.
10 *loc.cit*.fn. Sāṅkhyapravacanabhāṣya III, 57.

§ 16. This passage has a greater affinity with the Yoga system wherein the personal god is regarded as a *puruṣaviśeṣa*,[1] and he is essential for the yogin not only as the object of meditation but also as the remover of obstacles. Thus Kausalyā, here, was a yoginī who was meditating on Viṣṇu and was restrained (*niyata*);[2] the terms *prāṇāyāma* and *niyata* (*niyama* in BE)[3] also establish its relation with the Yoga school. Besides this the Rāmāyaṇa has a few references to Yoga; yoga along with knowledge (*yogaśāstrābhyām*) was regarded by Jāmbavant as a qualification for the Vānara who was to leap over to Laṅkā.[4] The control of breath in yogic meditation (i.e. *prāṇāyāma*)[5] and the yogic posture called the *Vīrāsana*[6] are mentioned. The statement that the Ātman should be yoked to Dharma (*abhiyoktavyaḥ*)[7] may also be regarded as relating to the Yoga. Besides, the BE and the GE mention that Rāma who was bound by the *Śarabandha* of Indrajit regained consciousness through *sattvayoga*.[8] The NW in an exclusive verse refers to the association between a yogin and the god in a simile (*hṛdi yogīva devatām*)[9] while the GE alludes to the fundamental teaching in the classical Yoga system, namely, the eight factors of the yogic training (*yuktam aṣṭāṅgayā buddhyā*).[10] No details are, however, given. And much reliance cannot be placed on this verse because it can be a later interpolation.

§ 17. Another system of Indian philosophy with which the Rāmāyaṇa appears to be familiar is that of *Nyāya;* and Vibhīṣaṇa who actually spoke in *Nyāya* terms in the northern recensions is called *Nyāyakovidam*[11] in the NW. The importance of logic (*tarka*)[12] in speech is brought out by the regular epithet given to statements, namely, *hetumat* (provided with reasons or proofs).[13] Besides *tarka* and *hetu* the epic refers to a few other terms of the Nyāya system; but *vāda*, *yukti*, and *chala* which Radhakrishnan enumerates among the logical terms in the Rāmāyaṇa[14] are used in their popular sense conveying nothing that could make them resemble the technical terms of the philosophical system. Mere identity in form is insufficient when they are proferred in proof of the antiquity of the system.

§ 18. The northern recensions give us a reference to the *Pramāṇas* (standards or sources of knowledge); the four *Pramāṇas* of the Nyāya system are mentioned as *Aupamya* (for *Upamāna* comparison), *Anumāna* (inference), *Pratyakṣa* (perception) and *Āgama* (authority). It is Vibhīṣaṇa

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1 Radhakrishnan: IPR II p. 371.
2 NW II, 6, 32.
3 BE II. 4, 34.
4 NW IV, 57, 37, (not BE).
5 NW II, 6, 32; BE VII, 7, 6.
6 NW II, 113, 14.
7 NW II, 119, 17.
8 GE VI, 24, 3; BE VI, 49, 3. (not NW)
9 NW V, 11, 31 (not BE and GE)
10 GE V, 81, 14 (not BE and NW)
11 NW VI, 102, 5 (not BE and GE); Cf. NW VII, 93, 20, (not BE & GE.)
12 NW III, 64, 16; V, 69, 17.
13 NW II, 26, 1; II, 56, 1; II, 66, 38.
14 Radhakrishnan: IPR II p. 35 fn.

who says that the lack of intelligence (*abuddhitā*) would never be experienced by one who examines (everything) with reference to these four *Pramāṇas*.[1] Further, the Pramāṇas, *Pratyakṣa*[2] and *Anumāna*[3] are referred to in all recensions. Nothing more is known about the Nyāya system from the Rāmāyaṇa. Yet it may be surmised that the term *Niḥśreyasaphala*[4] used to signify liberation has its origin in this system where it is the term for the state of emancipation.

§ 19. The Rāmāyaṇa does not refer to any other philosophical system. The Uttarakāṇḍa in an exclusive verse of the NW mentions the *Mīmāṃsā* along with the Nyāya.[5]

§ 20. In supplying data on no subject so far have the recensions of the Rāmāyaṇa shown such divergences as in their references to philosophical views especially of the systems other than the Vedānta. It is true that the recensions agree on certain points of the systems cited therein. But the variants are quite distinct and they call for an explanation. One of the main problems in the philosophical verses in the epic is that none of them were written actually to expound any philosophical view. They were either contained in similes or were added to give colour to a statement of a character. As such no logical consistency was sought for. Another difficulty is that the recensions were written down at different times and at different places and philosophical thought unlike the other factors of the Indian culture evolved rapidly and varied in accordance with the age and the place. This fact accounts for the contradictory statements which we meet when the data from the three recensions are collated. Finally, the ignorance of the actual philosophical notions on the part of the bards and others who preserved the epic might have led to a fair degree of "mystery-mongering" and bluffing with terminology. These make the Rāmāyaṇa almost worthless for the study of the philosophical thought of the period reflected by it. But it should not be forgotten that the data on the Vedānta concept of *Brahman* have for us a special significance especially from the chronological point of view.

B. The Religion

§ 21. The ancient Indian reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa was essentially religious in temperament. In philosophy he disliked materialism as we are made to understand by Rāma's criticism of Jābāli's speech (VIII § 5). This was because materialistic doctrines negated all that was held by the ancient Indian as dear and sacred to him. He had his

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1 NW V, 90, 22-24 (not BE)
2 NW II. 5, 29.
3 NW IV, 7, 74.
4 NW VI, 43, 8.
5 NW VII, 93, 20 (not BE & GE).

gods on whose favour he depended for his welfare both in this world and the beyond; he performed sacrifices and did good deeds with the view to obtain rewards; and he restrained himself in various aspects of life lest his indulgence brought about his spiritual downfall. These concepts of the ancient Indian were incongruous with materialism and hence his refutation of it. In the Rāmāyaṇa as Barua observes "we feel throughout a deep religious sense of duty, right and justice, of which the tone is intensely moral."[1]

§ 22. Accordingly, it considers any materialistic doctrines to be associated with nihilism (*nāstikya*), which is said to gain currency due to the fault of kings (*rājadoṣa*) and during anarchy.[2] In the reign of a great king there is no opportunity for such teachings to exist.[3] And from the questions in the later *Kaccit* section—the long questionnaire of Rāma (VIII § 4)—it appears that the king should be aware whether his subjects were not opposed to the gods (*adevadrohaka*) and whether they attended on deluded Brahmans who imagined themselves to be wise and who being clever in causing calamity expounded materialism (cf. *lokāyatikān brāhmaṇān*).[4] The responsibility assumed here by the king is important because it proves that the ruler was not only the protector of the realms but also the defender of the faith.

§ 23. The association of this spiritual function with the supreme power in the state seems to indicate the significance attached by the ancient Indians to their religion. And we find that Rāma in the Rāmāyaṇa is an anxious guardian of the faith, who not only criticized materialistic doctrines but also accounted for them; he said, "When the bridge of Dharma of one who regards Dharma as supreme (*dharmapradhānasya*) is damaged then nihilism arises in the helpless individual."[5] The Rāmāyaṇa thus seeks to uphold the religion of the orthodox sections of the ancient Indians with such enthusiasm as to become a suitable text for a later interpolator to insert a strong criticism of even the Buddha. A verse which is apparently a later interpolation as revealed by the context records as words of Rāma, "The *Buddha* is like a thief. May you know here that the *Tathāgata* is a nihilist. Therefore the wise one who is the cleverest among men shall not lean towards nihilism."[6]

§ 24. The Rāmāyaṇa, which defends thus the orthodox religion, depicts the ancient Indians as engrossed in religious practices. They began their day with the morning rites (*paurvāhnika*)[7] wherein they went to the temples[8] and worshipped the gods, the *Pitṛs* and the Brahmans.[9]

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1 Barua: *Asu: Muk: Sil. Jub.* III p. 411.
2 NW II, 114, 66; II, 73, 26.
3 NW I, 6, 15.
4 NW II, 114, 23 & 30.
5 NW III, 70, 5, (not BE)
6 BE II, 109, 34 (NW II, 122 is omitted; it is apparently a printing error).
7 NW III, 22, 3; BE VII, 42, 28.
8 BE VII, 37, 13.
9 NW II, 29, 30; BE VII, 37, 14.

They worshipped the dawn and repeated hymns with restrained minds[1] (VIII § 119). A similar rite was performed in the evening; the epic describes how the hermits bathed, sacrificed at the fire and worshipped the evening twilight.[2] The people whose practices are reflected in the Rāmāyaṇa regarded it their obligation to worship the gods and the *Pitṛs*.[3] They performed sacrifices (Cf. *Yāyajūkaḥ* as an epithet to Daśaratha)[4] and observed vows and fasts (*vratopavāsa*), which were sometimes resorted to on special occasions as on the eve of Rāma's coronation.[5] And on these occasions sexual intercourse was eschewed (VI § 13).

§ 25. Besides, at times of both joy and sorrow religious practices occupied an important position in the life of the ancient Indians. The newly-weds went to the temples to worship the gods and those who were to be worshiped.[6] The people in the assembly, who were glad because Daśaratha had decided to consecrate Rāma went home and paid homage to the gods.[7] So did Kausalyā perform what appears to have been a thanks-giving ceremony in her own temple to the gods and the *Pitṛs*,[8] while Sītā too made offerings to the gods and the *Pitṛs* at the time Rāma was supposed to be consecrated.[9] Moreover it appears that religious ceremonies were associated with occasions of national rejoicing; for instance when Bharata heard that Rāma was returning after his exile he ordered that all the gods and the *Caityas* of the city should be worshipped with offerings of incense and garlands.[10]

§ 26. There are also a number of allusions to religion in its association with the daily life. Kausalyā told Rāma that she had tormented her body with self-restraint and fasting in order to bring him up.[11] This seems to refer to certain religious practices which were undertaken by a mother in the course of bringing up a child; but it is not possible to trace what they actually were. In attempting something risky the intervention of the gods was apparently expected and it is through this motive that Sītā worshipped the gods before entering the pyre,[12] and, according to the BE, Hanumat worshipped the Sun, Mahendra, Pavana and Svayambhū before leaping over to Laṅkā.[13] A similar concept is behind the adoration of gods by Sītā at the sight of some unlucky omens.[14] The manner in which the gods were worshipped is referred to in a few verses. The hands were clasped in salutation (*kṛtāñjaliputa*) and hymns were chanted.[15] Garlands and incense besides sweetmeats (*modaka*), flowers

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1 NW II, 8, 6; II, 60, 4.
2 NW II, 70, 39.
3 NW II, 28, 17; BE II, 109, 26.
4 BE II, 72, 15.
5 NW II, 29, 29, II, 6, 22; II, 7, 11.
6 NW I, 72, 11.
7 NW II, 5, 36.
8 NW II, 20, 5-9.
9 NW II, 29, 4.
10 NW VI, 108, 2.
11 NW II, 20, 36.
12 NW VI, 97, 24.
13 BE V, 1, 8.
14 BE VII, 46, 18.
15 NW II, 20, 8-9.

and fried paddy were usually offered to the gods.[1] These appear to have been in no way different from the rites adopted today in the Hindu and even Buddhist temples of India and Ceylon.

§ 27. The important position held by religion in ancient Indian society is further indicated by that section of the population who devoted their lives entirely to the cause of religion. The most remarkable of religious personages mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa were the Ṛṣis[2] who were also called the *munis*[3] and the *yatis*.[4] The religious men are described in the epic as knowers of *Brahman*[5] and as intent on asceticism and Vedic study.[6] They were clad in the costume of forest-dwellers (III § 27) and were engaged in the practice of Dharma; they were constantly attached to penance and non-violence.[7] They were truthful and possessed of self-control,[8] and as Sītā described, "The great sages who were attached to truthfulness, who were of restrained selves and of great fortune and for whom there was neither pleasantness nor unpleasantness are very fortunate indeed."[9] The sage was an ideal person and hence did Rāma say of himself, "May you know me who am established in the Dharma alone to be comparable to the Ṛṣis."[10] Further, they were respected by even kings and princes.[11]

§ 28. The religious order of Ṛṣis—which really is not an order in the modern sense—does not appear to have been a monopoly of the Brahmans although the Ṛṣis mentioned in the ancient literature of India were for the most part Brahmans. From the terms *Brahmarṣi* and *Rājarṣi*[12] which denote the sages of the Brahman and the Kṣatriya castes it may be implied that the other two castes were excluded from attaining this spiritual position.

§ 29. From the Rāmāyaṇa it appears that these sages did a remarkable service to India in spreading the Aryan civilization[13] (I §§ 24 & 25). The Uttarakāṇḍa records a tradition as regards the colonization of India according to which Kauśīka, Yavakrēta and others went to the east, Agastya colonized the south, Vasiṣṭha, Kāśyapa, Atri, Viśvāmitra and Gautama resorted to the west and the seven sages (*Saptarṣi*) went to the North.[14] It is difficult to prove or disprove the veracity of this tradition. However, the southern region is believed to have been colonized by Agastya who figures prominently in the literature of the Dravidians (II § 51).

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1 NW VI, 108, 2; BE II, 67, 27; VII, 41, 13.
2 NW II, 84, 14; II, 102, 23; III, 1, 4; II, 56, 4; II, 28, 20 & 41; III, 4, 15-16.
3 NW II, 100, 27; II, 102, 7; III, 1, 26; III, 14, 17; II, 58, 5 & 12.
4 NW I, 5, 19.
5 NW I, 4, 50.
6 NW I, 71, 8.
7 NW II, 2, 18.
8 NW I, 5, 19.
9 NW V, 20, 67 (not GE)
10 NW II, 19, 64.
11 NW II, 58, 36-38; II, 2, 18-19.
12 NW I, 16, 28-29; BE VII, 55, 8; NW II, 20, 13, II, 22,14; II, 70,51; II, 125, 6.
13 Bhandarkar: CLB p. 20; Ghosh: *Asu. Muk: Sil. Jub.* III, p. 386.
14 BE VII, 1, 2-6.

§ 30. Besides the sages who lived in hermitages of the forest there were priests—some of whom like Vasiṣṭha were Ṛṣis[1]—whose functions were reciting of hymns on festive occasions[2] and officiating at sacrifices as *Ṛtvijaḥ*.[3] The Rāmāyaṇa gives a long list of such priests as taking part in the sacrifice of Rāma.[4] They seem to have exercised a fair degree of political power. Probably because they were also the teachers, the kings respected them;[5] for instance Daśaratha rose from his seat at the approach of Vasiṣṭha.[6] They were the *Purohitas* of the kings and as Vasiṣṭha in the court of Ayodhyā they must have been influential. The priests led by Vasiṣṭha discussed the arrangements for the funeral of Daśaratha.[7] And Yudhājit is said to have sent his own teacher Gārgya as an ambassador to Rāma.[8] These facts are ample to lead us to the conclusion that the priests in ancient India did not form an exclusive religious order but were for all intents and purposes laymen with secular duties who in time of ceremony officiated as priests. This category of religious men had been less secluded than the sages who lived in *Āśramas*. By way of distinguishing these two classes it may be argued that the priests who performed politico-religious functions in cities were Brahmans of the *Gṛhastha* stage while the others were those who were in the *Vānaprastha āśrama*.

§ 31. Besides these were wandering ascetics (*parivrājaka*) who were called also *bhikṣus* and *sādhus*. All these terms are used alike to describe the guise acquired by Rāvaṇa when he entered the hermitage of Rāma in order to abduct Sītā.[9] Hanumat is also said to have taken the guise of a *bhikṣu* to meet Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa.[10] Further, Bharata had learnt the *Dharma* from *bhikṣus*[11] while Sītā had heard about the difficulties of dwelling in the forest from *bhikṣukis*.[12] And Śabarī whom Rāma met in the forest is described as a *śramaṇā*.[13] The BE has a further reference to *śramaṇas* in a statement that the sin committed by Mandhātṛ was as grave as that committed by a *śramaṇa*.[14]

§ 32. The Rāmāyaṇa throws no light on the exact relationship between these religious persons and the Brahmaṇical *ṛṣis* and priests. A verse in the BE, however, gives us a bit of additional information in describing the costume of Rāvaṇa who had disguised himself as a *parivrājaka*. He was clad in yellow (*kāśāya*) and wore the hair in a knot (*śikhī*). He had an umbrella, wore sandals (*chatrī upānahī*) and carried a stick and a gourd of water (*yaṣṭikamaṇḍalū*).[15] From this description

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1 NW II, 7, 5-6.
2 NW II, 8, 7.
3 NW II, 118, 18 & 26; II, 6, 35. Cf. also BE VII, 90, 9.
4 BE VII, 96, 2-5.
5 Cf. NW II, 6, 35; BE VII, 100, 1.
6 NW II, 7, 23-24.
7 NW II, 73, 2.
8 BE VII, 100, 1-2.
9 NW III, 51, 2; VI, 107, 47; III, 51, 7; III, 51, 9.
10 NW IV, 2, 2.
11 NW II, 2, 16.
12 NW II, 32, 13.
13 NW I, 1, 56.
14 BE IV, 18, 33.
15 BE III, 46, 3 (not NW & GE).

the *parivrājaka* appears to have been more or less like the *Sanyāsin;* this would not agree with the accounts of Buddhist and Jain monks. From the texts of these two sects we learn that there were in India many types of religious men who were known as *parivrājakas*, *bhikṣus* and *śramaṇas*. Both the Buddha and Mahāvīra met in their wanderings such persons and had with them interesting religious discussions.[1] Besides, they adopted the names already current to denote the religious orders which they themselves organized. Thus the Buddha called his disciples both *bhikṣu* (Pāli: *bhikkhu*) and *śramaṇa* (Pāli: *samaṇa*)[2] while Mahāvīra called his disciples *śramaṇas* (Ardhamāgadhi: *samaṇa*).[3]

§ 33. As such it is not possible to regard the references to these in the Rāmāyaṇa as representing the Buddhist or the Jain religious order in particular. They may refer even to the older types of religious men and women who pursued a life of asceticism and devotion in order to gain emancipation. We may consider it more accurate to interpret the allusions in the epic as reflecting these because the Rāmāyaṇa in no description of these *bhikṣus* and *śramaṇas* hints at the religious systems which fostered them and which in the case of Buddhism and Jainism decided their conduct. But this view has to be purely conjectural as arguments, however flimsy, can be adduced to establish also the opposite view; for instance, the statement that Śabarī committed suicide by entering the fire so as to attain liberation may lead one to the conclusion that she was a Jain *samaṇā*.[4]

§ 34. Although the Rāmāyaṇa mentions religious persons who were actually not Brahmanical, the religion upheld therein is no doubt Brahmanism. Pargiter, however, seems to suggest that Brahmanism known to the Rāmāyaṇa was not that which was current in the middle region of North India which he calls the "brahmanically *elite* region". He accounts for this as resulting from the political differences between the Ailas and the Bharatas. He says, "That Aila influences did produce modifications is suggested by the remarkable statements made in the Rāmāyaṇa. . . .; first, that, while eastern and southern kings and kings of the distant Punjab were invited to Daśaratha's sacrifice at Ayodhyā, none of the neighbouring Pauravạ (Bharata) and Yādava kings, who flourished in all the middle region of North India were invited; and secondly that Daśaratha called in the help, not of brahmans from Madhya-deśa but of the rustic Ṛṣyaśṛṅga from Aṅga. It was at that time that the great developments of brahmanism had taken place among the Bharatas. Ayodhyā and the Vasiṣṭhas had no association then with that brahmanically *elite* region. Brahmanism as it took shape under the Bharatas

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1 Cf. Law: Historical Gleanings, Calcutta, 1922 pp. 9 ff.
2 Pāli-English Dictionary (P.T.S.) s.vv.
3 Jain: LIJC p. 192.
4 NW III, 80, 32-34.

apparently differed from that at Ayodhyā."[1] This observation of Pargiter is to be borne in mind in discussing the data on the religion.

§ 35. Both Farquhar and Radhakrishnan introduce the religion of the Rāmāyaṇa as "frankly polytheistic and external."[2] All the Vedic gods figure in the mythology reflected in the epic although no evidence is found in support of the view that everyone of these was worshipped. The worship of gods, it has been observed (VIII §§ 24-26), was a special feature of the daily life of the ancient Indians.[3] The gods were adored with awe and a common simile in the epic compares to a god the person who should be respected and regarded as superior.[4] And another simile indicates that the devotee maintained a respectful silence and did not turn in the presence of a god (probably in the temple); Rāma asked Kaikeyī about Daśaratha's silence: "*kathaṃ tasmin na varteta pratyakṣam iva daivate.*"[5]

§ 36. The Rāmāyaṇa gives us several lists of gods who were worshipped by the characters of the epic. Kausalyā in performing a farewell rite for Rāma invoked *Brahmā, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Prajāpati, Maruts, Dhātā, Vidhātā, Pūṣan, Bhaga, Aryaman, Yama, Varuṇa Mitra, Ādityas, Rudras*;[6] *Skanda*, the general of the divine army, *Maheśvara, Soma, Śukra, Bṛhaspati*;[7] *Brahmā*, the lord of the whole world, *Vṛṣabhāṅka* (=*Śiva*) and *Janārdana* the lord of the three worlds (=*Viṣṇu*).[8] This list is interesting mainly because of the repetitions. Certain sections of the long hymn in which the names of these gods occur appear to have been interpolated. The corrupt state of the text here is further revealed, by the list given in the BE. Here the gods are *Maruts, Dhātā, Vidhātā Pūṣan, Bhaga, Aryaman*, the *Lokapālas*, led by *Vāsava*,[9] *Skanda, Bhagavān deva* (probably *Viṣṇu*), *Soma, Bṛhaspati*,[10] *Śukra, Soma, Sūrya, Dhanada, Yama, Agni, Vāyu* and *Brahmā*.[11] Here too repetitions are found. One may however account for them as a feature peculiar to an invocation. But the divergences between the recensions call for explanation especially because they give rise to very important problems; for instance, the NW does not give any prominence to Indra just as the BE does not have the combination Brahmā, Śiva and Viṣṇu while the NW has it twice over. It is likely that these references to the three gods of the *Trimūrti* are late interpolations. The original account of the gods worshipped by Kausalyā apparently included only the early Vedic gods who are common to both the lists of the Northern and Southern recensions.

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1 Pargiter: AIHT p. 314.
2 Farquhar; ORLI p. 47; Radhakrishnan: IPR I p. 482.
3 Cf. NW II, 29, 30; II, 27, 16; II, 116, 36; II, 29, 4.
4 Cf. NW III, 62, 3; II, 62, 21.
5 NW II, 19, 19.
6 NW II, 28, 20-21.
7 NW II, 28, 27-28.
8 NW II, 28, 35-36.
9 BE II, 25, 8-9.
10 BE II, 25, 11.
11 BE II, 25, 23-25.

§ 37. That the Vedic gods have been very important appears also from other references to gods who were worshipped or invoked for help. The *Sūta* invoked that *Soma*, *Sūrya*, *Śiva Vaiśravaṇa*, *Anila*, *Agni* and *Indra* might ensure victory for Daśaratha.[1] Here too the BE differs in mentioning only *Varuṇa*, *Agni* and *Indra*.[2] Further, Sītā propitiated *Vajradhara* (=*Indra*), *Yama*, *Varuṇa* and *Dhaneśa* to protect the directions.[3] The combination in this context is easily understood because these four gods are by an ancient mythological tradition associated with the four directions, East, South, West and North respectively. A more elaborate list of gods is given in connection with Hanumat's adventures in Laṅkā: he worshipped the *Vasūs*, *Rudras*, *Ādityas*, *Aśvins* and *Maruts*[4] and again invoked for guidance and protection *Brahmā Svayambhū*, *Agni*, *Vāyu*, *Vajrabhṛt* (=Indra), *Varuṇa* with a noose in hand, *Vāśudeva* bearing a wheel, *Śaṅkara* carrying a trident, *Soma*, *Āditya*, *Aśvins* and *Maruts*.[5] The BE this time preserves the major part of the list but omits the names of *Vāsudeva* and *Śaṅkara*.[6] It is worthwhile noting that the Southern recension has not included these two gods in a number of lists. Does it suggest that the BE represents religious conditions of a period prior to that when the *Trimūrti* concept was prevalent? It may be so because there can be no other reason for the omission of Viṣṇu and Śiva in the recension preserved in South India where the worship of these two gods was current from very ancient times. One may hazard another explanation though it may not be quite acceptable: in South India the two prominent sects were the Vaiṣṇavites and the Śaivites and hence the attempt of each sect to exclude the god worshipped by the other led to the exclusion of both in the southern recension. However simple this theory appears to be it is anything but the truth because in spite of these omissions the BE contains enough references to Viṣṇu and Śiva—though not together. (VIII §§ 36; 38).

§ 38. Furthermore, Hanumat is said to have worshipped *Sūrya*, *Mahendra*, *Pavana* and *Svayambhū* before leaping over the ocean.[7] Another list of gods is to be found in the description of Agastya's hermitage. Therein are mentioned *Brahmā*, *Śiva*, *Agni*, *Indra*, *Vivasvat* (=*Sūrya*), *Soma*, *Bhaga*, *Kuvera*, *Dhātā* and *Vidhātā*.[8] To these the BE adds *Viṣṇu*, *Varuṇa*, *Vasus*, *Nāgarāja*, *Garuḍa*, *Kārtikeya*, and *Dharma*.[9] Besides these there are in the Rāmāyaṇa allusions to various gods who were worshipped by the people. *Agni* was propitiated by Ṛṣis and was invoked by Sītā.[10] Rāma worshipped the sun[11] and before crossing

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1 NW II, 16, 21.
2 BE II, 15, 22.
3 NW II, 17, 21-22.
4 NW V, 8, 64.
5 NW V, 8, 73-75 (not GE).
6 BE V, 14, 63-64.
7 NW IV, 60, 18-19.
8 NW III, 16, 17-18 (not GE).
9 BE III, 12, 18-21.
10 BE I, 1, 45; NW, V, 49, 25-26; V, 49, 27-31; VI, 97, 28.
11 NW III, 21, 35.

the ocean he paid homage to *Varuṇa*.[1] In offering water in the obsequial rites for his father Rāma propitiated *Yama*.[2] *Vaiśravaṇa* is said to have been worshipped by all beings (*sarvabhūtanamaskṛta*)[3]. And among the gods who received oblations at Daśaratha's *aśvamedha* were *Brahmā*, *Sureśvara* (=*Indra*), *Sthāṇu* (=*Śiva*) and *Nārāyaṇa*.[4]

§ 39. These divergent lists of gods lead us to the conclusion that the ancient Indian whose religious practices are reflected in the Rāmāyaṇa worshipped practically all the Vedic gods without any sectarian differences which characterize later Hinduism. Though the mythology of the Rāmāyaṇa reveals the introduction of a number of new gods to the Vedic pantheon such as *Kāma*, *Kuvera*, *Śukra*, *Kārttikeya* and goddesses as *Lakṣmī*[5] only a few of them are actually worshipped. The multiplicity of the gods shows that polytheism was the keynote of the religion at this period and even the Vedic practice of upholding a single god on particular occasions (i.e. Kathenotheism) seems to have become obsolete.

§ 40. Moreover, the Rāmāyaṇa records certain trends which culminated in the sectarianism of the Vaiṣṇavites and Śaivites at a later date. We have already observed that certain interpolated texts of the older parts of the epic signify the concept of *Trimūrti* (VIII § 36). But the idea was nowhere clearly stated. The Rāmāyaṇa on the other hand represents definite traces of the development of Vaiṣṇavism especially in its later parts. As Farquhar says, " in its enlarged form the Rāmāyaṇa is still the first of all Vishnuite scriptures."[6] Besides the instances described above (VIII §§ 36 ff.), Rāma is said to have meditated upon and worshipped Viṣṇu in addition to sleeping in the temple of Viṣṇu on the eve of his coronation.[7] The fact that Viṣṇu among all the gods was propitiated on this occasion is no doubt important in order to understand the position of Viṣṇu in ancient Indian religion.

§ 41. What we discover in the epic is not the development of Vaiṣṇavism as a whole but of an aspect of it, which may be called "Rāmaism". The problem of Rāma as an incarnation of Viṣṇu has been already discussed (VII §§ 15 ff.). Here we shall consider the data on the development of the concept of Rāma worship. It may be that quite a secular statement like that made by the people of Ayodhyā to Lakṣmaṇa (i.e. the following of Rāma is your path to heaven: *eṣa svargasya te panthā yad Rāmam anugacchasi*)[8] could have in the course of time acquired a religious significance, thus giving rise to a number of similar statements but with a definite religious bearing. For instance it is Brahmā who while congratulating Rāma on his victory stated, "The men on

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1 NW V, 99, 9, (not BE & GE).
2 NW II, 116, 32.
3 NW III, 53, 19; IV, 36, 33.
4 NW I, 10, 52 (not BE).
5 Farquhar: ORLI p. 47.
6 Farquhar; ORLI p. 47.
7 NW II, 8, 3, & 7 & 4,
8 NW II, 43, 34.

earth, who are devoted to you (*bhaktimantaḥ*) will not be in vain. Having mentioned you, the god, the ancient and best of men, they without doubt will go to heaven after death."[1] Similarly, Daśaratha in divine form told Lakṣmaṇa, "When Rāma is pleased (*prasanne*) you shall attain greatness and heaven."[2] An identical concept is behind the eulogy of Agastya who told Rāma, "You, O descendant of Raghu, are the purifier of all beings. They who see you, O Rāma, even for a moment are purified and rendered worthy of heaven; they are fit to be adored by the gods. Thus, the best of Raghus, are you a sanctifier of all embodied ones. Those who speak of you on earth attain success.....You are the sole refuge of the world."[3] To these may be added the statement of Śabarī who was happy that she had attained the culmination of her asceticism for the gods had told her how she would be liberated at the sight of Rāma; she said, "Having propitiated him (i.e. Rāma) one will attain the eternal and immutable heaven."[4] And hence does the BE describe Rāma as devoted to those who resort to him for refuge (*śaraṇāgata-vatsala*[5]).

§ 42. Further data are available from the Uttarakāṇḍa and the Phalaśruti at the end of the Yuddhakāṇḍa. When Rāma went to heaven he as Viṣṇu told Brahmā that his devotees should be favoured (*bhaktā hi bhajitavyāś ca*) and Brahmā replied, "These who had assembled shall go to worlds called *Santānaka*. If there be any creature who thinks of you it will die through devotion to you and live in Santāna which is adjacent to the Brahma-world and possesses all qualities of the Brahma-world."[6] When the Phalaśrutis promise that the reciter as well as the listener of the Rāmāyaṇa would be liberated from all sins, would go to Viṣṇu-world and would please the great god Viṣṇu[7] the implication is that the epic is sacred to Viṣṇu. These later accretions go a long way in proving that the Rāmaistic aspect of Vaiṣṇavism, whose beginnings are reflected in certain statements of the early parts of the Rāmāyaṇa, had developed through the Bāla and the Uttara kāṇḍas and certain sections of the Yuddhakāṇḍa until it reached the culmination in the latest additions to the epic.

§ 43. We may consider now the view of R. G. Bhandarkar that "the cult of Rāma must have come into existence about the eleventh century."[8] He, however, finds data in the earlier literature to testify to the prevalence of the concept that Rāma was an incarnation of Viṣṇu during the early centuries of the Christian Era.[9] Why should such a long period intervene between the concept of divine incarnation and

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1 NW VI, 98, 49-50.
2 NW VI, 100, 40.
3 BE VII, 82, 10-13.
4 NW III, 80, 14-17.
5 BE V, 21, 20-21.
6 BE VII, 110, 17-20.
7 NW VI, 110, 15; 20; 26;28 & 29; BE VII, III, 5-6.
8 Bhandarkar: VS p. 47.
9 Bhandarkar: *loc. cit.*

the cult of Rāma? The few glimpses in the Rāmāyaṇa—though in very late—portions show that they were more or less simultaneous developments in the epic. And it is important to note that even the latest portions of the Rāmāyaṇa cannot be in any way later than the sixth or the seventh century A.D. (I § 90); the greater probability is that they were added round about the first and second centuries A.D.

§ 44. Besides the data outlined in the foregoing paragraphs the Rāmāyaṇa includes a number of references to *Bhakti* which too evince a well-established Rāma cult. The term *Bhakti* in most contexts signify the secular sense of attachment among members of a family, between pupils and teachers and servants and masters.[1] Yet in certain instances the religious concept of *Bhakti* seems to be represented. *Bhaktas* are mentioned in association with gods in the Ayodhyākāṇḍda.[2] Besides, Rāma is asked to be devoted to the devotees—*bhaktiṃ bhakteṣu darśaya*.[3] If this statement has any religious import the fundamental doctrine of the Bhakti system is to be observed here. As indicated in a verse of the Uttarakāṇḍa (VIII § 42), the god extends his grace to the devotee; in the words of Betty Heimann "the Bhakta needs the reaction and collaboration of yet another external agent i.e. his God....The God responds to the devotee's trembling call and draws him up, as it were, to his own height by sending downwards to him rays of strength, enlightenment and responding love."[4] The *Bhakti* in Rāma appears to be based on this same concept. As further evidence of Rāmaistic *Bhakti* we may quote the epithets *śaraṇāgata vatsala* (VIII § 41) given to Rāma in the BE and *prapannānām parāgatiḥ*[5] (the highest refuge of the devotees). The term *prapanna* is specially important because of its association with *Prapatti* (self-surrender to God).[6] Even the term *śaraṇāgata* may be related to the notion of *Śaraṇāgati* (resorting to God for refuge) which according to Ramaswami Sastri is the message of the Rāmāyaṇa.[7]

§ 45. Finally we may trace the data in the Rāmāyaṇa depicting the growth of Śaivism. Śiva like Viṣṇu occurs in the lists of gods worshipped by the characters of the epic (VIII §§ 36-39). In fact Kausalyā stated that she paid homage to the gods such as Śiva (i.e. *Śivādayaḥ* may even mean: with Śiva as the chief).[8] There is also a reference to a *Śivatīrtha* on Mandākinī river;[9] but no definite conclusion can be arrived at as to whether it was a holy place sacred to Śaivites because the term could mean either an auspicious place of worship or a safe ford. The Uttarakāṇḍa gives us the most comprehensive account of the cult of Śiva. The BE says, "where Rāvaṇa went he took with him a golden

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1 NW II, 36, 8; II, 6, 39; II, 32, 2; II, 24, 5; V, 57, 15; III, 16, 3; BE V, 38,9; VII, 39, 27.
2 NW II, 29, 34.
3 II, 47, 31.
4 Heimann: Paṭipadā I p. 41.
5 NW IV, 10, 16-17.
6 Cf. Bhandarkar: VS pp. 54 f.
7 Ramaswami Sastri: SR p. 160.
8 NW II, 28, 41.
9 NW II, 116, 31.

liṅga (phallus associated with Śiva). He placed it on an altar of sand and worshipped it with flowers and incense of divine fragrance. Thus the Rākṣasa paid homage to it which was the highest, which was the destroyer of the sufferings of the good and the giver of boons and which was dazzling with golden rays; stretching out his arms he danced before it".1 The NW has further details on the worship of *Śiva-liṅga;* in an exclusive passage it states, "The Rākṣasa Rāvaṇa while paying homage to the *liṅga* offered constantly flowers, incense and oblations and pleased it with music from all instruments, with sprinklings of milk, with curd and water. It was decked with all gems and shone there with silk drapings mixed with linen and eulogies enumerating a hundred and eight names. Whatever task begun by Rāvaṇa after worshipping that god ends in success when he pays homage to *Śivaliṅga.*"2 Another verse of the Uttarakāṇḍa alludes to Rāvaṇa worshipping Śiva with various songs and eulogies (*sāmabhir vividhaiḥ strotraiḥ*).3 Further, the ministers of Rāma are said to have worshipped Śiva (*namaskṛtvā vṛṣadhvajam*),4 while Umā is described in the Bālakāṇḍa as *lokanamaskṛtām.*

§ 46. From these data it appears that the cult of Śiva was well-established by the time the Uttarakāṇḍa came into existence. His worship has been associated with singing and dancing, which probably formed the beginning of the elaborate ceremonies associated with him in the Tantric literature. It is interesting to ponder how these allusions to Śaivism could have come to be included in the Rāmāyaṇa which, as we have observed (VIII §§ 40 ff.), is predominantly Vaiṣṇavite. Just as the Vaiṣṇavite references came to be included as a result of a sectarian revision of a purely secular theme, the material on Śaivism too was included at a revision undertaken by the Śaivites. This was quite probably later than the Vaiṣṇavite revision because the epic was recognized as a Vaiṣṇavite text by the time the others revised it so that its dominant Vaiṣṇavite garb could not be altogether obliterated. But no attempt has been made in the Rāmāyaṇa to establish the supremacy of Śiva over Viṣṇu. In fact the two gods have no clashes in this epic.

§ 47. There is, however, an instance where according to the BE Śiva favoured Rāma; it is said that at the Indian end of Rāma's bridge Śiva himself helped Rāma and that a holy place of the ocean was established there (*atra pūrvaṃ mahādevaḥ prasādam akarod vibhuḥ. Etat tu dṛśyate tīrthaṃ sāgarasya mahātmanaḥ*).5 The commentator Rāma explains this verse as implying that Rāma established a place sacred to Śiva after winning the grace of the ocean in order to allay any obstructions to the building of the bridge (*setor nirvighnatāsiddhyai samudraprasādanānantaraṃ Śivasthāpanaṃ rāmeṇa kṛtam iti gamyate*).6 Evidently an

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1 BE VII, 31, 42 - 44.
2 NW VII,19,40-43 (not BE and GE)
3 BE VII, 16, 34.
4 BE VII, 91, 7.
5 BE VI, 123, 20 (not NW and GE).
6 Cf. Commy. of BE VI, 123, 20.

interpolation, it might have been inserted as Vaidya has suggested "in support of the claim of the great temple of Rāmeśvara."[1]

§ 48. Besides the gods, the ancient Indian appears to have worshipped certain sacred objects; though the references in the Rāmāyaṇa to such popular religious practices are scanty they are no doubt instructive. The prevalence of theriolatry is indicated by the references to the cow as a holy animal. Cows who were brought for Rāma's consecration are called "*gāvaḥ puṇyāḥ.*"[2] Even Indra is said to have spoken to his cow, Surabhi, with hands clasped in salutation.[3] The cows were held in such high esteem as to have the kicking of a cow enumerated among the grievous sins; when Bharata cursed the person at whose approval Rāma was banished he stated that the culprit should incur the sin of the kicking of a cow (according to the NW a sleeping cow).[4] Although Hanumat has been worshipped in India from very old times the Rāmāyaṇa, unlike in the case of Rāma, shows no signs of a prevailing Hanumat-cult. But Hanumat is no doubt represented as a Vānara with a divine origin as well as god-like powers.

§ 49. The argument that Hanumat was worshipped as a god and hence he found a place in the Rāmāyaṇa is not altogether tenable. We have no evidence to prove that Hanumat was treated as a god before the Rāmāyaṇa period even in South India. What appears more probable is that Hanumat became and object of worship in association with Rāma and his cult was, though loosely, connected with the growth of Rāmaism. In India today the cult of Hanumat is only an aspect of Rāma worship; the devotees seek the favour of Hanumat by repeating the name of Rāma.

§ 50. The Rāmāyaṇa refers to the prevalence of tree-worship. Bharadvāja instructed Sītā to worship and pray at the banyan tree, Śyāma. And Sītā likewise circumambulated and worshipped it and prayed that Daśaratha, Kausalyā and others lived long.[5] It appears here that the tree in itself was the object of worship; the BE gives the formula used by Sītā as "*Namas te' stu mahāvṛkṣa*" (O great tree, may my salutation be unto you)[6]. But there existed also the concept that trees were the abodes of gods. Thus when Sītā was being abducted she wailed, "Whoever be the gods of the various trees of this forest, I worship them. May they tell my husband that I am abducted."[7] Whether this concept promoted the practice of tree-worship is not clear from the epic. The awe-inspiring form of certain trees like the banyan might have quite likely made a deep impression on the primitive minds, which resulted in the worship of trees.

§ 51. Further, there was the practice of river worship. Certain rivers were regarded as sacred. In one place Gaṅgā and Yamunā along

1 Vaidya: RRV p. 155.
2 NW II, 16, 14.
3 NW II, 80, 20.
4 NW II,83,4; BE II,75,31
5 II, 59, 6 & 16-18; BE II, 55, 6-7 & 24-25.
6 BE II, 55, 24.
7 NW III, 54, 30.

with other rivers are mentioned as holy.[1] The confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā is said to be a holy place famous in the world (*gaṅgāyamunayoḥ puṇyaḥ saṅgamo lokaviśrutaḥ*).[2] The Ganges is described in the epic not only as sacred and noble among rivers but also as leading to heaven (*svargārohaniḥśreṇim*).[3] In the BE it is said to be auspicious with sacred water (*sammānyasalilāṃ śivām*)[4] and to destroy all sins (*sarvapāpa-pranāśinī*).[5] When Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa went to the hermitage of Viśvāmitra they were asked to worship the Ganges.[6] And Viśvāmitra told them that even the story of the descent of the Ganges was conducive to longevity, purity and heaven.[7] At Śṛṅgaverapura Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa worshipped Gaṅgā[8] while Sītā invoked it for protection in a prayer which was partly a panegyric and partly a supplication,[9] and further made a vow that she would give a hundred thousand heads of cattle and beautiful garments to Brahmans if her husband were to regain his kingdom.[10] They worshipped Kālindī too in a similar manner[11] and according to the BE Sītā made a vow to perform a sacrifice with a thousand cows and a hundred pots of liquor.[12] Further, Hanumat is said to have worshipped the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā.[13] In the Uttarakāṇḍa there is an account of the worship of Narmadā by Rāvaṇa; he told his ministers, "Rid yourselves of the sins by bathing in this great river."[14] He offered flowers, bathed in the river and uttered incantations (*japtvā japyam anuttamaṃ*).[15]

§ 52. The river-worship too has had a very ancient and popular origin. It is likely that rivers sometimes became sacred due to some association with a great person; a verse in the Ayodhyākāṇḍa seems to imply this. Here the people of Ayodhyā say, "The auspicious rivers and ponds of the forest, whose clear water Rāma will purify by dipping in them, are indeed possessed of merit" (*kṛtapuṇyāḥ*).[16] The currency of such a concept in later times is evident from the first verse of the Meghadūta where the waters of Rāmagiri are said to be sanctified by the baths of *Sītā* (*janakatanayāsnānapuṇyodakeṣu*).

§ 53. The Rāmāyaṇa describes the determination of Rāma to see Sāgara in person before building the bridge.[17] His effort is more or less a form of *Satyagraha* and hence may not be regarded as representing a cult associated with the sea. This is not cogent enough to prove the existence of sea-worship at the time reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa. The worship of mountains is implied in a verse of a later geographical canto of the Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa, wherein the Vānaras are described as worshipping a great mountain.[18]

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1 NW II, 16, 3 & 4.
2 NW II, 58, 22.
3 NW II, 56, 4; II, 51, 2.
4 BE II, 50, 29.
5 BE I, 43,34; VII, 46,23.
6 NW I, 22, 9.
7 NW I, 40, 57.
8 NW II, 56, 24. Cf. BE II, 52,79.
9 NW II, 56, 14-21.
10 NW II, 56, 19-20.
11 NW II, 59, 15.
12 NW II, 59, 15.
13 NW VI, 106, 24.
14 BE VII, 31, 33.
15 BE VII, 31, 33-39.
16 NW II, 49, 10.
17 NW V, 94, 19 ff; BE VI, 21, 1 ff.
18 NW IV, 33, 39.

§ 54. Finally, we shall take into consideration the places of worship mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa. *Tīrthas*[1] were apparently holy places which were quite likely connected with the river-worship. The etymological sense of the word i.e. the ford or the ferry would have in all probability been the original, as the metaphorical sense (i.e. that which crosses one over the sorrows of this world or *saṃsāra*) has to be considerd a later development. Two aspects of the worship at the *tīrthas* are depicted in the epic. Firstly, the devotee bathed in the river at the holy *tīrtha;* in the epic Gautama returned after dipping in the water at a holy *tīrtha* (*puṇyatīrthodakaklinnaṃ*).[2] Secondly, alms were given and wealth was distributed at these places.[3] These practices have been followed by the Hindus with meticulous attention as is clear from a Nasik Cave inscription of the time of Nahapāna, wherein the meritorious deeds of Uṣavadāta are enumerated.[4] Even today the wish of every pious Hindu is to go on pilgrimage to various *tīrthas* and have their souls cleansed of all sins.[5] And these places have been regarded as sacred from time immemorial.

§ 55. There were temples where the devotees made offerings and prayed to gods. They formed a characteristic feature of the cities. In Ayodhyā, Kiṣkindhā, Laṅkā Takṣaśilā and Puṣkalāvati there were *Devāyatanas* (also called *Devatāgāra* and *Devatālaya*).[6] A verse in the BE indicates that they were well patronised by the people for Bharata was shocked to find them deserted when he arrived in Ayodhyā.[7] From the later *Kaccit* section it appears that it was considered the duty of kings to build temples for the people; Rāma asks Bharata if the people were provided with temples, wells and tanks.[8] The temples in the cities were actually stable buildings and not merely trees or stones which had been sanctified. A more primitive type of sacred spots may be visualized in the case of Prayāga which was a *tīrtha* being at the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā and which was therefore regarded an abode of gods. As stated earlier (II § 27) the *Devasthāna* here is in all likelihood the *Akṣaya Vaṭa*, the undecaying banyan tree.[9]

§ 56. Besides these public places of worship the individual also had certain apartments of their houses set apart as prayer-rooms. Kausalyā invoked the gods in her own *Devāgāra*.[10] On the eve of Rāma's consecration he slept in the temple of Viṣṇu (*srīmatyāyatane viṣṇoḥ*),[11] which too was quite probably an apartment in Rāma's palace dedicated

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1 NW II, 72, 42; BE II, 52, 90; GE III, 23, 37.
2 NW I, 44, 24.
3 NW II, 39, 8.
4 Sircar: *Select Inscriptions* I pp. 160 ff.
5 Cf. Hopkins: *Pro. Amr. Phil. Soc.* XLIX p. 25.
6 NW I, 5, 10; II, 8, 11, IV, 26, 11; VI, 82, 22, & 38; BE VII, 101, 15.
7 BE II, 71, 40.
8 NW II, 114, 21.
9 NW II, 102, 19-20.
10 NW II, 20, 8.
11 NW II, 8, 4.

to Viṣṇu.[1] It is likely that each residence had its own sacred fire-place because the worship of fire has been an important rite in India since Vedic times (VIII § 120). In Bharadvāja's hermitage there was a special Agniśālā where he invoked Viśvakarman.[2] And in the BE Rāma requested Kausalyā to be intent on tending the fire (i.e. *agnyāgāraparā bhava*).[3] In the hermitage of Agastya there were apartments set apart as temples for *Brahmā*, *Śiva Agni*, *Indra*, *Vivasvat*, *Soma Bhaga*, *Kuvera*, *Dhātā*, *Vidhātā* and *Vāyu*;[4] to this list the BE adds the temples for *Viṣṇu*, *Varuṇa*, *Gāyatri*, *Vasūs*, *Nāgarāja*, *Garuḍa*, *Kārtikeya* and *Dharma*.[5] The practice of having separate apartments for each god might have been prevalent in ancient India; and the BE describes that Rāma established altars, *caityas* and *āyatanas* in the new hut he built in the forest.[6] Whether images of the gods were installed in these temples is not certain. However, there are no clear references to any images in the Rāmāyaṇa. The GE mentions *Pratimā*, but only in enumerating unlucky omens (VII § 30).[7] In the BE the commentary, *Tilaka* of Rāma, explains the term *devatārca* as images (*devatarcāḥ pratimāḥ*).[8] With the data at our disposal no definite conclusion seems possible although it is probable that some temples had images while others did not; for instance, the temples in Rāma's hut might have been merely places set apart for the various gods.

§ 57. Another place of worship mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa is the *Caitya*. Kosala is said to be marked by hundreds of *Caityas* and sacrificial posts (*yūpa*)[9] and in Ayodhyā there were *Caityas* besides *devāyatanas*.[10] In Laṅkā there were a number of them and they are called in the Rāmāyaṇa as *Caityaprāsāda* and *Caityagṛha*.[11] The Commentator explains them as the temples of the ancestral deities of the Rākṣasas (*rakṣaḥkuladevatāprāsādaḥ*).[12] The use of *Prāsāda* and *Gṛha* to qualify the *Caityas* of Laṅkā is very important because it distinguishes between the two types of *Caityas*. Those of Northern India were not constructions; they were in all probability trees, rocks and other objects of worship. In fact the term *Caitya* is twice used to imply trees which were worshipped, viz. *Caityavṛksa*[13] and *samūla-caitya*.[14] Likewise, according to the GE, Kabandha showed Rāma a rock which, he described was a great *Caitya* of Brahmā, created in the past (*udāro brahmaṇaḥ caityaḥ pūrvakālābhinirmitaḥ*).[15]

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1 Cf. Vaidya: RRV p.12.
2 NW II, 104, 10.
3 BE II, 58, 18.
4 NW III, 16, 17-18.
5 BE III, 12, 17-21.
6 BE II, 56, 33.
7 GE VI, 11, 28.
8 BE II, 71, 40. Ramaswami Sastri's reference i. e. BE III, 71, 39 is apparently an error Cf. SR p. 160.
9 NW II, 50, 25.
10 NW II, 8, 11; BE 71, 42.
11 NW V, 39, 1; V, 10, 17; V, 56, 93; V, 7, 13, V, 39, 27; VI, 62, 13.
12 Commy. on BE V, 43, 1.
13 NW III, 42, 4.
14 NW II, 74, 13.
15 GE III, 76, 30.

§ 58. The *Caitya* of the Buddhists does not seem to be implied in the descriptions of the *Caityas* of Northern India. However, the Commentator takes a verse in the BE as representing the Buddhist *Caityas*; the verse states that Rāvaṇa like a *Caitya* in the cemetery was frightful even though decked.[1] The Commentator says that the *Caityas* were frightful because they were Buddhist institutions (*Caityam bauddhāyatanam ata eva bhayaṅkaraḥ*).[2] There is no doubt whatsoever that the commentary is wrong here. The reference in the BE is to either a funeral pyre or a tomb which is regarded as frightful due to its association with death.

§ 59. The main problem is why the *Caityas* of India and Laṅkā were thus distinguished. The findings of the Archaeological Department of Ceylon seem to shed a flood of light on this subject. A number of pillars around the earliest *Stūpa* or *Caitya* of Ceylon (i.e. *Thūpārāma* at Anuradhapura) indicate that there was a mansion over the *Caitya* in the form of a *Vaṭa-dā-gē*—a common structure in the Buddhist Architecture of Ceylon.[3] The *Caityaprāsādas* of Rāvaṇa in Laṅkā may then be the precursors of such constructions. In these too the pillars formed an important feature (III § 22). How can this coincidence be explained? We have already observed that the author of the Rāmāyaṇa modelled his Laṅkā on Ceylon (II §§ 40 ff). If so it is possible that he also represented the architectural structure which was well-known in Ceylon. There is no difficulty as regards chronology in this instance as there was lively contact between Northern India under the Mauryan dynasty and Ceylon during the period reflected by the epic. If this conjecture is tenable the *Caityaprāsādas* were Buddhist places of worship.

§ 60. The foregoing paragraphs give us a vivid picture of the religion of the ancient Indians as reflected in the Rāmāyaṇa with reference to their attitude to religion, the priests and holy men, the gods worshipped by them and their places of worship. The data of the epic have thrown abundant light on the growth of sectarianism in Hinduism. And now we shall take into consideration the religious views which moulded the lives and the character of the Indians in ancient times.

C. Karma and Rebirth

§ 61. The theory of Karma along with that of rebirth has been the fundamental doctrine underlying all systems of Indian philosophy and religions excepting that of the Cārvākas. The law of Karma is not merely resignation to fate. As Radhakrishnan observes: "Whatever

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1 BE V, 22, 29.
2 Cf. Commy. on BE V, 22, 29.
3 A model of the Thūpārāma in its supposed original form was exhibited in the stall of the Archaeological Dept. at the Colombo Exhibition, Feb.-March 1952.

happens to us in this life we have to submit in meek resignation, for it is the result of our past doings. Yet the future is in our power and we can work with hope and confidence."[1] The data in the Rāmāyaṇa tend to justify this view-point.

§ 62. The characters of the epic resign themselves to the calamities which befall them on the ground that their misfortune here is the retribution for their evil acts in a previous existence. Sītā when abducted by Rāvaṇa wailed, "What sort of a sin have I committed in my previous birth so as to reduce me to this fearful and disastrous state?"[2] And she told Hanumat, "By me have all these been done in the past; my own deeds are being experienced (*svakṛtaṃ hy upabhujyate*). This state had to be necessarily attained by me due to my deeds in the previous existence."[3] So did Rāma and Daśaratha, in the BE, regard their calamities as results (*vipāka*) of their past actions.[4] In the Uttarakāṇḍa the women abducted by Rāvaṇa and the Brahman whose son died prematurely question in the course of their lamentation, "What is the evil action (*duṣkṛtaṃ karma*) done by us in the past birth"?[5], while Sītā wondered whether she had separated any wives and husbands in her previous life so that she suffered from an identical retribution.[6] The implication here is the popular notion that the reward or the retribution for an action was similar to the act itself; as the Hitopadeśa has it:

Yasmāc ca yena yathā ca yadā ca yac ca
Yāvac ca yatra ca śubhāśubham ātmakarma
Tasmāc ca tena ca tathā ca tadā ca tac ca
Tāvac ca tatra ca vidhāṭṛvaśād upaiti.

(From whatever cause, by whatever means, in whatever manner, at whatever time, of whatever kind, in whatever proportion and at whatever place, one may do a deed good or bad one reaps (the fruit of it) in obedience to the will of providence from that cause, by that means, in that manner, etc.).[7]

§ 63. The Rāmāyaṇa also has a number of stray references to the doctrine of Karma. "The doer of evil action", states a verse, "necessarily obtains the fruit of his action after some time has passed just as a tree bears fruit in season."[8] Another expounds that the man who does good or bad deeds shall essentially attain their consequences in the course of time.[9] This is further elaborated in the BE which adds that he who pursues action without knowing its result may come to

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1 Radhakrishnan: IPR I p. 249.
2 NW V, 20, 18.
3 NW VI, 94, 36 & 38.
4 BE III, 63, 4; II, 64, 59.
5 BE VII, 24, 15; VII, 73, 4.
6 BE VII, 48, 4.
7 Kale: Hitopadeśa (1924) p, 10.
8 NW III, 34, 8.
9 NW II, 69, 5; Cf. BE II, 63, 6.

grief at the time of fruition (*phalavelāyām*) like the person who resorts to *Kimśuka* flowers (taking them to be pieces of flesh).[1] The epic in a passage put in the mouth of Sītā explains how the individual alone is responsible for his action; she tells Rāma, "O noble one, the father, the mother, the brothers, the relations and the sons enjoy both here and after death the fruit of their own actions separately. Happiness or sorrow does not come to a son due to his father's action nor to a father due to his son's. Each arises according to one's own action."[2] Similarly Mandodarī said in connection with Rāvaṇa that each one went away with his or her good and bad deeds.[3] The popular belief that one suffers for one's evil deeds before enjoying the rewards for the good is reflected in a statement of Rāvaṇa to Sītā, "Your evil action of the past had gone (i.e. had been wiped out) through your dwelling in the forest. And now may you attain this, the reward for your good deeds."[4]

§ 64. The law of Karma lays the accent on morality. Good deeds (*puṇyakarma*) are desired for; according to the Uttarakāṇḍa prosperity, beauty, power, sons, wealth and cleverness are attained by men through them[5] while the evil deeds bring about their ruin.[6] Nothing is attainable without good karma; as Brahmā is said to have told Śveta, "Never will anything that is not sown grow."[7] (*anuptaṃ rohate śveta na kadācin mahāmate*). The acquisition of good karma is to be the main purpose of this life. This existence is in itself a state won through good deeds (*saddharmopārjitāl lokāt*)[8], and according to the BE this is the *karmabhūmi*, the sphere of action, in which good karma is to be performed; *karmabhūmim imaṃ prāpya kartavyaṃ karma yac chubham*.[9]

§ 65. Integrally related to the law of Karma was the theory of rebirth. The Rāmāyaṇa refers to rebirth once in the NW with the term *punarjanma*[10] as opposed to the Upaniṣadic expression *punarmṛtyu*. The life after death finds mention in the epic as *paraloka*, *paratra*, and *amutra*.[11] Sītā wailed when she heard that Rāma was killed imploring why he went to the other world (*asmāl lokāt paraṃ lokam*) leaving her behind.[12] The epic believes that a good wife follows her husband to the next birth (*sā pretyāpy anugacchati*).[13] And Tārā is said to have longed for union with her husband after his death.[14] Further, in the Uttarakāṇḍa Vedavatī told Rāvaṇa that she would be born again to

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1 BE II, 63, 9.
2 NW II, 30, 2-3.
3 NW VI, 92, 26.
4 NW III, 61, 28.
5 BE VII, 15, 24.
6 BE VII, 16, 20.
7 BE VII, 78, 15-16.
8 NW II, 66, 41.
9 BE II, 109, 28.
10 NW VI, 95, 29 (not BE & GE)
11 NW II, 72, 35; II, 45, 8; II, 72, 11; II, 14, 8 Cf. II, 37, 12; II, 80, 3.
12 NW VI, 8, 23.
13 NW II, 32, 21.
14 NW IV, 17, 36.

cause his death.[1] The Rāmāyaṇa in a philosophical verse of the Northern recensions — which is identical with II, 27 of the Bhagavadgītā—states, "Death is certain to one who is born and birth is certain to one who is dead. Therefore you should not grieve over these inevitable states."[2] The BE in a similar verse recommends righteousness, kindness and obedience to elders as the means of conquering the next existence (*paralokaṃ jigīṣatā*).[3] There is no doubt that the Rāmāyaṇa reflects the concept that *Ātman* or the individual soul was the connecting link between the various existences (VIII § 11); and in the NW that soul which leaves the body and goes forth is described as the enjoyer of the fruit of one's own Karma (*svakarmaphalabhoktā hi deham utsṛjya gacchati*).[4]

§ 66. The life after death was either good or bad according to the merits and demerits acquired in this birth. Of the happy states that which is mentioned most in the Rāmāyaṇa is the *Svarga*.[5] One goes to *Svarga* through one's good deeds (*sukṛta, puṇyakrta*).[6] Daśaratha is said to have entered *Svarga* as he performed many sacrifices, led a righteous life, tended subordinates, ruled over the people and gave gifts to the righteous ones.[7] Śabarī attained it through concentration (*samādhi*).[8] Moreover, it is implied that ascetic practices, too, lead one to *Svarga* because Bharata observed that the hermitage (*tāpasānām nivāsa*) at Citrakūta was clearly a path to *Svarga*.[9] A wife goes to it through her goodness[10] while it is thought that Jaṭāyu would have gone to it because Rāma (divinity is suggested here) cremated him.[11] According to the Phalaśruti *Svarga* is to be obtained by giving away with faith cows, land, gems, garments and wealth[12] and also by reading the Rāmāyaṇa.[13] This *Svarga* is the abode of the good only, it cannot be attained by the sinful ones.[14] Nor can one remain in it after his merits are exhausted (Cf. *puṇyakṣaye cyutam svargāt*).[15]

§ 67. Another concept relating to *Svarga* is that one acquires a divine form before entering it.[16] A faint trace of the idea that an exceptional being could go to it without dying seems to be present in Daśaratha's wish that he should go to *Svarga* alive.[17] This is comparable with the story of Triśaṅku. The epic is definite that *Svarga* is the highest form of bliss conceivable because a statement regularly

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1 BE VII, 17, 30.
2 NW II, 88, 22 (not BE)
3 BE II, 105, 40.
4 NW IV, 17, 37 (not BE & GE).
5 NW II, 33, 11 & 20 & 29; II, 49, 25; II 53, 28; II, 57, 34; II, 60, 10; II, 64, 7; II, 78, 16; II, 85, 22, III, 8, 15; III, 75, 28; BE VII, 99, 16.
6 NW II, 78, 16; III, 1, 59; III, 17, 10.
7 NW II, 119, 18-20.
8 NW III, 80, 34.
9 NW II, 106, 20.
10 NW II, 27, 15.
11 NW IV, 48, 13.
12 NW VI, 110, 22.
13 BE I, 1, 99.
14 BE III, 31, 27.
15 NW II, 88, 10; VI, 105, 7.
16 NW II, 70, 46; I, 40, 35; BE II, 64, 47.
17 NW II, 3, 34.

made at times of separation and bereavement is that even life in *Svarga* is without attraction when separated from the beloved.[1]

§ 68. What the ancient Indians conceived to be the actual character of *Svarga* cannot be known for certain from the data of the Rāmāyaṇa. The term *Svarga* as well as the parallel form *Svarloka*[2] is evidently associated with the primitive concept that the sky with its luminous bodies was the heaven. The synonyms *divam* and *tridivam*[3] through their connection with the root *dyu*—to shine—seem to represent a similar concept. *Svarga* was regarded as the abode of gods and hence was called by such names as *Divyaloka*, *Devaloka*, *Devālaya*, *Tridaśālaya* and *Padavīṃ devatānām*.[4] Certain sections of *Svarga* were probably conceived to be set apart for various gods and were called after them as *Indraloka*,[5] *Viṣṇuloka*[6] or *Brahmaloka*[7] (VII § 3). The idea that a being would be born in the same world as a god (*salokatā*) appears to have been current at the time reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa although the term *salokatā* occurs very rarely and with no agreement among recensions; according to the GE the hermits at Śarabhaṅga's hermitage told Rāma that a good king went to a state of living with Indra (i.e. *Indrasalokatām*)[8]; and in the BE Viśvāmitra admonished Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa that a person who was devoted to Kārtikeya went with his sons and grand sons to the abode of Skanda (*Skandasālokyatām*)[9].

§ 69. The same concept seems to be associated with the world of Brahmā. A good ruler is said to go to the *Brahmasthāna*.[10] It is to be won only through severe asceticism and is unattainable by an untrained one (*jitam ugrena tapasā duṣprāpam akṛtātmabhiḥ*)[11]. But the Vānaras are told by Aṅgada that they could attain it by being victorious in battle (*yudhi nirjitāḥ*)[12]. The Uttarakāṇḍa of the Rāmāyaṇa refers to certain individuals who had gone to the world of Brahmā.[13] What the *Brahmaloka* was like the Rāmāyaṇa does not indicate, but a verse in the Uttarakāṇḍa states that it was free of hunger and thirst (*kṣutpipāsāvivarjitaḥ*)[14]. Another verse, absent in the NW but found in the other two recensions, places the *Brahmaloka* above the worlds of the fire-worshippers, of righteous sages and of the gods.[15] According to this the world of Brahmā is to be regarded not merely as a part of the world of gods but as an abode beyond it. The views on this problem recorded in the

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1 NW II, 30, 21; II, 24, 15; V, 27, 23; II, 30, 5; Cf. NW II, 30, 10; VI, 100, 14.
2 NW I, 40, 53; BE I, 15, 34.
3 NW II, 58, 31-32; III, 81, 1; BE II, 109, 29; III, 5, 30; VII, 59, 18.
4 NW II, 119, 21; IV, 2, 10; I, 38,28; II, 16, 56; VI, 16, 58.
5 NW VI, 100, 9; I, 39, 11; I, 43, 5.
6 NW I, 1, 95.
7 NW II, 56, 18; I, 31, 4; I, 16, 26; IV, 33, 36; VI, 45, 31.
8 GE III, 10, 15.
9 BE I, 37, 32.
10 NW III, 7, 16.
11 NW III, 6, 23.
12 NW VI, 45, 31.
13 BE VII, 51, 21; VII, 90, 23; VII, 98, 24.
14 BE VII, 78, 12.
15 BE III, 5, 41; GE III, 9, 36.

ancient literature are not at all settled. The Buddhist theory regards the *Brahmalokas* as no less than twenty, *sixteen* being worlds of form (*rūpa-brahma-loka*) and *four* incorporeal (*arūpa-brahma-loka*), and these are considered as Yogic states above the sensual (*Kāma*) plane to which the Devalokas belong.[1] The concept of the Brahmaloka in Indian religious thought is an important problem whose solution is closely associated with the *Brahman-theory* of the Upaniṣads.

§ 70. The *Pitṛloka* too might have been conceived by the ancient Indians as a section of *Svarga*. In the Rāmāyaṇa we know it only as the abode to which the departed souls go.[2] It is probably the place described in the Uttarakāṇḍa as lying on the way to the abode of Yama, where Rāvaṇa is said to have seen people who were happy on account of their good deeds on earth.[3] Besides these the epic mentions certain states in which the righteous were regarded as enjoying the reward for their actions. They were probably called by the general term "*lokān paramān*" (the highest worlds).[4] They appear to have been reckoned as eternal states as well (*lokān śāśvatān*).[5] The epic refers to a number of such states which are named after some righteous deed; thus we hear in one passage of the worlds of the doers of good deeds (*puṇyakṛtāṃs, ca lokān*),[6] of the sages well versed in the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas,[7] of the warriors who do not retreat, of ascetics, of the performers of sacrifices, of those of good conduct,[8] of the givers of refuge and of the truthful.[9] Another passage speaks of the states attained by the righteous, by the fire-worshippers, by warriors who do not retreat, by givers of land, cattle and gold and by those who have taken refuge (*probably* in gods) (*saraṇāgatīnāṃ*).[10] The BE also gives an elaborate list of similar states attained by warriors, by those engaged in Vedic studies and asceticism, by givers of land, by worshippers of fire, by those observing the vow of monogamy (*ekapatnīvrata*), by givers of a thousand head of cattle, by those serving the elders and by those who abandon their bodies (*dehanyāsakṛtāṃ*).[11] These lists seem to give the impression that the ancient Indian religions had prescribed different abodes for each act. But such a concept is not reflected in any of the known religious systems. In analysing the contexts it may be concluded that the lists purport to enumerate such actions as were regarded as leading to happy states by way of reward. These are being mentioned by certain characters who in the grip of sorrow wish their dead friends and relations the best in the next birth.

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1 See *Pāli-English Dict.* (P.T.S.) s.v. *brahma-loka*.
2 NW II, 116, 7 & 33.
3 BE VII, 21, 18-20.
4 NW II, 80, 27.
5 NW II, 70, 43-44.
6 NW IV, 17, 41. Cf. NW II, 87, 40.
7 NW II, 70, 42.
8 NW II, 70, 41.
9 NW II, 70, 42.
10 NW III, 75, 34-35.
11 BE II, 64, 40-44.

§ 71. As another state of happiness is mentioned the *Yakṣatva* (the state of a *Yakṣa*); it is referred to along with immortality (*amaratva*) in a statement of Rāma at the abduction of Sītā, "I do not wish for the *Yakṣatva* or immortality or even the earth without her."[1] What it actually represented is not clear from the Rāmāyaṇa. It is, however, quite unlikely that reference was to the Yakṣas (II § 84). The greater probability is that the *Yakṣatva* meant a state of 'an adorable being'.[2]

§ 72. The religious thought reflected in the Rāmāyaṇa deals with also the unhappy states to which the individuals go on account of their evil actions. Those mentioned in the epic are *Naraka*[3] and *Niraya*[4] both of which seem to convey the concept of a hell. Of course the term *Niraya* occurs in the Rāmāyaṇa also in a non-eschatological sense as a calamity, downfall or misery.[5] A sage who carried a sword with him is said to have been reduced to *Naraka*.[6] A king who did not perform his duties daily would fall into *Naraka*.[7] According to the GE a man who lacks forbearance, who is not truthful, who indulges in adultery and who is cruel will be scorched in *Naraka* for his acts (*pacyate narake ghore dahyamānaḥ svakarmaṇā*).[8] And there did Rāvaṇa see people suffering for their evil actions.[9] *Naraka* is in the Rāmāyaṇa contrasted with *svarga* when Sītā tells Rāma that *Naraka* may be better with you than *Svarga* (without you).[10]

§ 73. Similar accounts are found in the epic with reference to *Niraya*. The terms *Naraka* and *Niraya* appear to be synonymous and no distinction can be traced between them at least as far as the Rāmāyaṇa data go. Bharata told Rāma that Kaikeyī would go to *Niraya* apparently because she banished Rāma.[11] In another verse Vālin recounted those who are destined to *Niraya* (*nirayagāminaḥ*) as murderers of kings and Brahmans, slaughterers of cattle, thieves, those attached to killing, nihilists and younger brothers who marry before their elder brothers (*parivettā?* probably *pari+vid*).[12]

§ 74. The Rāmāyaṇa gives us only a brief description of hell as conceived by the ancient Indians. Sītā told Rāvaṇa that he would on account of his evil deed see the river *Vaitaraṇī*, with rows of waves and bordering the forest of swords (*khaḍgapatravanānaddhām*), and the Śālmali tree with flowers of smelt gold, leaves of cat's eyes and terrible sharp thorns of iron.[13] In another verse the abode of Yama, or rather the ocean of Yama's prowess (i.e. *Yamasya balasāgaram*) is said to be

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1 NW III, 65, 4.
2 Cf. Wijesekera; UCR. Vol. I. No. 2 pp. 24 ff.
3 NW II, 53, 31; II, 79, 8; III, 10,18; IV, 62, 32.
4 NW II, 21, 28; II, 40, 19; II, 115, 7; II, 80, 8; VI, 80, 10.
5 NW II, 79, 3-4; II, 72, 16.
6 NW III, 10, 18.
7 BE VII, 53, 6.
8 GE III, 57, 20.
9 BE VII, 21, 12-17.
10 NW II, 30, 21.
11 NW II, 115, 7.
12 NW IV, 13, 15.
13 NW III, 59, 23-24.

decked with the Śālmali tree.[1] The mention of the Śālmali tree is interesting because it is connected with the retribution for the sin of adultery. The Buddhist concept of hell also in a similar manner prescribes the Śālmali tree in connection with adultery; it describes how the man would attempt to reach the woman who is on the top of the tree by climbing it while the sharp thorns eat into his body.[2] The origin of this concept is, however, obscure. It is probable that the fierce-looking thorns of the Śālmali tree were dreaded so much that climbing it would have been a severe torture. Or could it be that it was the punishment for adultery in some ancient primitive culture from which the concept was borrowed by the Indian religions?

§ 75. Another form of punishment apparently in hell is getting a person to eat his own flesh. This is to be undergone by those who do not pay homage to a righteous guest.[3] Besides, the Uttarakāṇḍa mentions *pretagopas*[4] who as in Buddhist accounts[5] were probably the guardians of the hell, who were entrusted with punishing sinners according to their sins. A statement of Sugrīva in the BE seems to refer to a concept that sins acquired the guise of an animal to oppress their doer; after killing Vālin he repented, "The elephant made of my sin (*enomayo. . . .hastī*) harasses me like a swollen river its bank."[6] However, it is not clear whether the statement has any particular reference to retribution after death because it can be regarded also as a simple metaphor.

§ 76. Finally we may discuss the Rāmāyaṇa data on immortality and liberation. The epic does not deal with liberation as earnestly as it deals with *Dharma*. We have already observed that the *puruṣārthas* upheld by the Rāmāyaṇa were only *Artha*, *kāma* and *dharma*. The omission of *mokṣa* creates no doubt an interesting problem (I § 4). The main reason for this may be that the epic reflects a theistic religion according to which the bliss in the next birth was dependent on the grace of the personal God. *Svarga* or the abode of the God (VIII §§ 66 ff.) was considered to be the goal of one's religious pursuits. And liberation was not conceived to be something different from this. The philosophical concept that *Svarga* was only a relatively happy state and not the ultimate bliss[7] is alien to the religion of the Rāmāyaṇa. On the other hand the grace of the God was reckoned as the highest form of liberation; for instance Viṣṇu is called the supreme *mokṣa* in the Rāmāyaṇa (VIII § 8). The fact that the epic did not give full credit to the *mokṣa* as taught by the Vedānta and the other systems of philosophy may be the reason for

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1 NW V, 78, 12.
2 Cf. reference to Sattisimbalivana, Jātaka V p. 453.
3 NW III, 16, 26.
4 BE VII, 21, 24.
5 See Aṅguttara Nikāya (P.T.S.) I p. 138 (*nirya-pālā*)
6 BE IV, 24, 17.
7 Cf. Kaṭhopaniṣad: I, 28; II, 1-4.

the lack of substantial data on a state of emancipation superior to *Svarga*. The only clear reference occurs in a simile which mentions sages who have attained emancipation (*yatīnāṃ iva muktānām*).[1]

§ 77. The term *Amaratva* in the Rāmāyaṇa may represent the concept of immortality.[2] In the Araṇyakāṇḍa it is enumerated with the *Yakṣatva* as a highly desirable state which Rāma did not wish to attain without Sītā (VIII § 71). As the context reveals the reference here is in all probability to immortality as a state of emancipation. In the Uttarakāṇḍa is another allusion to immortality as something not available in this world to any being (*nāsti sarvāmaratvam hi kasyacit prāṇino bhuvi*).[3]

§ 78. A term of special interest occurring in an interpolated verse of the Bālakāṇḍa of the BE, is *Nirvāṇa* because of the particular Buddhist connotation of the word. Śiva told the gods, "May the earth attain *Nirvāṇa*" (*tridaśāḥ pṛthivī caiva nirvāṇam adhigacchatu*).[4] The commentary explains *Nirvāṇa* with *sukham*. The use of the term in this sense is no doubt due to Buddhistic influences. Hence an interesting observation here is that the allusions to Buddhism, either direct or indirect, occur in the later interpolations of the Rāmāyaṇa (cf. also VIII §§ 23; 59). Does this suggest that the older parts of the Rāmāyaṇa are pre-Buddhistic? It may be so as the positive evidence of geographical conditions has indicated (II § 52). But the argument that as Buddhism finds no representation in the genuine portions of the epic (these must be anterior to Buddhism) cannot be deemed absolutely cogent as it is an *argumentum ex silentio*.

§ 79. The data on Karma and rebirth in the Rāmāyaṇa are as we observe from the foregoing paragraphs very scanty. Besides, no special remarks are made in the epic on these subjects. Actually it alludes to theories whose currency from early times is proved by both contemporary works and those prior to it. The epic only testifies to their existence at the time reflected by it. As such our purpose here has been to outline the data of the Rāmāyaṇa on these subjects rather than to comment on them critically—a task almost impossible with the sparse and disconnected references available.

D. Dharma and Morality

§ 80. The theory of Karma and rebirth which formed the basis of the Indian religious thought has as its pivot an advanced code of ethics (VIII § 61) and thus morality has been the key-note of the more important religions of India. The concept of morality among the ancient Indians

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1 NW II, 57, 2
2 NW III, 65, 4.
3 BE VII, 30, 9.
4 BE I, 36, 13.

had descended from very early times. As Hopkins says, "that the foundation of Hindu ethics was laid before the Aryan race reached India may easily be demonstrated. For a moral element lies in the very recognition of bright beneficient and holy gods as opposed to dark demoniac powers. Avestan and Slavic parallels reveal that these conceptions were pre-Indic."[1] The Ṛg Veda itself reveals in the concept of *Ṛta* a cosmic law which decided the moral conduct of men. The strong sense of moral duty and obligation which seems to have characterised the social relations of the ancient Indians reflected in the Dharmaśāstras, the epics and the Buddhist and Jain works might have undoubtedly had this concept of *Ṛta* as its precursor although it is difficult to trace its historical development on account of the callous neglect of the moral aspect of religion in the Brāhmaṇas in entirety and in the Upaniṣads partially. However, the progress made in moral teachings between the Ṛgvedic *Ṛta* and the post-Upaniṣadic ethical conceptions was remarkable.

§ 81. The fundamental factor in this progress was indubitably the replacement of *Ṛta* by *Dharma*. If *Ṛta* (from the root *ṛ*—to move) represented a limited sphere of cosmic law or of morality as an expression of divine law, the theory of *Dharma* reflected a wider field; the term is derived from the root *dhṛ*—to support, to sustain—and lends itself to a wide range of interpretations. The complexity of the concept of Dharma is most clearly indicated by the numerous meanings of the term, which make it almost untranslatable.

§ 82. The *Dharma* may be, in a way explained as a socio-ethical Norm which appears to have been its earliest sense. In the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad where in all probability the earliest reference to the Dharma occurs the best interpretation seems to be "the socio-ethical or legal code"; the Upaniṣadic passage discusses the creation of the *Dharma* by God after he had produced kingship. "It was on account of the supremacy of the *Dharma* that even a weak man is able to govern a strong man. And this *Dharma* is identified with truth (*satya*)".[2] The *Dharma*, it continues, is the king of kings (*kṣatrasya kṣatraḥ*).[3] This reference is extremely useful because it shows that the *Dharma* was both secular in the sense of a legal code and ethical in its identification with truth. These two aspects of the *Dharma* were in due course elaborated until in the religious literature of India we find that this term includes many facts and factors whose only common feature is apparently the insistence on the right and the noble as opposed to the wicked and the base (i.e. the *Adharma*); and no less than sixteen of them are enumerated by G. H. Mees.[4]

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1 Hopkins: EIH p. 1.
2 Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad: I, 4, 11-14.
3 *loc. cit.* I, 4, 14.
4 Mees: DSM pp. 8-9.

§ 83. The Rāmāyaṇa representing the post-Upaniṣadic thought depicts some—though not all—of these concepts of the *Dharma.* It mentions *Laukikadharma* in the sense of social convention and usage,[1] and *Gārhasthasya dharma* signifying the duties of a householder.[2] The first of these references is to the concept which Mees has termed "Convention, a code of customs and traditions."[3] The second is in all likelihood associated with the *Varṇāśramadharma* although it is possible that the *Gārhasthasya dharma* was something similar to the *gihi-dhamma* of the Buddha as discussed in the Aṅguttara Nikāya and the Sigālovāda Sutta.[4] It is important to note that the *Gārhasthasya dharma* of the Rāmāyaṇa, which denotes the duties of the individual in the second *āśrama* is quite different from the Buddhist *gihidhamma* in so far as the former pertains to a code of social traditions and obligations while the latter is altogether ethical in purpose.

§ 84. A concept of the Dharma with its sphere restricted further is the *Kuladharma*[5] which apparently included the conventions and customs peculiar to a family. Rāma speaks of the ancient *Dharma* which befits the family of the Ikṣvākus, (*dharmam paurāṇam ikṣvākūnāṃ kulocitam*).[6] According to the BE Rāma told Lakṣmaṇa that the force which impelled Bharata to come in search of him to Citrakūta was the *kuladharma;* he said that Bharata might have come remembering the traditions of the family (*kuladharmam anusmaran*).[7] The *Dharma* which is stated in the Rāmāyaṇa to have governed the conduct of separated wives may also be an aspect of the *Kuladharma.*[8] And the *Dharma* in the following statements too may probably be connected with the same: "The wife of the elder brother who is alive is a mother according to the *Dharma.*"[9] "The eldest brother, the father and the person who imparts knowledge should be known as the three fathers if the *Dharma* is followed. And if one has a purpose in the *Dharma* (*dharmaś ced asti kāraṇam*) the younger brother, the son and the virtuous pupil should be thought of (alike) as sons."[10]

§ 85. Whether the *Kuladharma* was conceived as a code of customs and conventions imposed on the institution of family with the same intensity as the *Varṇāśramadharma* or only as a set of traditions preserved by a particular family as a private concern is not clear from the meagre data in the Rāmāyaṇa. The first alternative is quite in keeping with the social organization of ancient India according to which the caste and the Āśramas depended on the Varṇāśramadharma, and

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1 NW IV, 16, 73. (*dharmāt..... laukikāt*).
2 NW II, 27, 16.
3 Mees: DSM p. 8: item No. 9.
4 Aṅguttara Nikāya (P.T.S.) III p. 41; Dīgha Nikāya (P.T.S.) III pp. 180 ff. Cf. Wijesekera: BSW p. 10.
5 NW II, 20, 14; II, 125, 9.
6 NW II, 25, 10.
7 BE II, 97, 9.
8 NW V, 22, 12-13.
9 NW IV, 47, 4.
10 GE IV, 17, 30-31.

the family depended on the *Kuladharma* while — to go further — the individual followed the *Svadharma*. The *Svadharma*[1] is the Norm which guided the individual in society. It may be that it included the *Dharma* regarding the *Varṇa* (caste) and the *Kula* (family) as considered from the point of view of the individual. However, if data were available to show that the family was guided by the *Kuladharma* we could have observed how the concept of the *Dharma* had its ramifications in accordance with the social structure.

§ 86. The *Svadharma* has been often explained as the caste function. This interpretation is correct only in a limited sense that the individual's *dharma* was determined by the caste-*dharma*. Mees traces in an interesting manner how the caste-*dharma* superseded the *Svadharma* but it is not quite correct to regard the *Svadharma* as an altogether individualistic Norm comparable to the freedom of the individual in a modern state.[2] His argument is apparently based on the etymology of the term (*sva*=one's own).[3] But it did not, as far as the known literary works go, represent at any time in the histroy of India a Norm which determined the class of the individual in society.[4] The principle on which Mees has worked out his definition of *Svadharma*, namely, "A man's Varṇa shows itself according to his behaviour as a member of society"[5] is based on the didactic literature which usually suggest the ideal rather than depict the actual.

§ 87. In actuality the problem was that the individual's freedom was restricted by his duties and obligations to the family and the caste (IV § 36). The *Dharma* of the caste decided almost every aspect of his life. It is this restriction of the individual's freedom which led to statements implying the above principle. But there was no ideal state wherein the *Svadharma* ensured autonomy and determined the position of the individual in society; and it is difficult to accept Mees' ingenious theory that the concept of the *Svadharma* as subsidiary to the caste-*dharma* was due to a process of deterioration.[6] The *Svadharma* therefore has been in India not an equivalent of the autonomy of the individual in a non-totalitarian state of today but on the other hand a rigid Norm of individualistic behaviour which tied the individual unto his caste and family. The Buddhist texts mean the same when they say that an individual entering upon a religious life would have to abandon his own *Dharma* (*sakaṃ dhammaṃ* i.e. his caste and family duties and obligations).[7]

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1 NW II, 38, 35; II, 118, 17.
2 Mees: DSM p. 175.
3 Mees: *loc. cit.* p. 174 fn. Svadharma =one's proper Dharma.
4 Mees: *ibid* p. 18.
5 Mees: *ibid* p. 59.
6 Mees: *ibid* p. 175. "Varṇa was generally taken in a far too dogmatic sense, the individual Dharma became largely subsidiary, 'mixture of Varṇas' was promoted, and caste-dharma over-ruled Svadharma."
7 Dīgha Nikāya (P. T. S.) III p. 95 Cf. Wijesekera: BSW p. 9.

§ 88. The *Svadharma* of the Kṣatriyas is mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa as the *Kṣatradharma*. In the Bālakāṇḍa Vasiṣṭha told Daśaratha, "No *Dharma* other than protection is expected of the Kṣatriyas. Resort to the *Svadharma*. You should not violate the *Dharma*."[1] Fighting especially for a just cause to protect the righteous was the usual duty associated with the Kṣatriyas.[2] The GE calls it the *Yodhadharma*.[3] Once the epic regards the consecration as the greatest *Dharma* of a Kṣatriya (*dharmo hy eṣa paraḥ proktaḥ kṣatriyasyābhiṣecanam*).[4] The *Kṣatradharma* is quite likely an aspect of the *Varṇāśramadharma*; and as the Rāmāyaṇa deals with a story of the Kṣatriyas their *Dharma* alone finds mention in it.

§ 89. The most important of the secular conceptions of the *Dharma* is that of the *Rājadharma*, which the Rāmāyaṇa mentions a number of times,[5] although no clear definition of it is available in the epic. In a verse in the Ayodhyākāṇḍa Rāma is asked to follow the *Rājyadharma* which is most probably the same as the *Rājadharma* by making offerings and distributing wealth at holy places (*dadad dānāni tīrtheṣu visṛjaṃs, ca dhanāni me*).[6] And the Bālakāṇḍa explains that the destruction of the *Adharma* and the promotion of the *Dharma* form the ancient *Dharma* of those born in royal families (*rājavaṃśābhijātānaṃ eṣa dharmaḥ*).[7] If *rājavaṃsa* here is taken in the sense of the Kṣatriya caste the reference is to the *Kṣatradharma* and not really to the *Rājadharma*.

§ 90. The *Rājadharma* as dealt with in the Arthaśāstra,[8] in the *Rājadharma* section of the Mahābhārata, in the Rājavagga of the Aṅguttara Nikāya, and in the Aggañña, Cakkavatti-sīhanāda, Lakkhaṇa and Sigālovāda suttas of the Dīghanikāya besides the inscriptions of Aśoka[9] is a socio-ethical Norm which determined the duties and obligations of a king towards his subjects. As the Aṅguttara Nikāya states it was regarded as the king of even universal monarchs (*dhammo raññō Cakkavattissa rājā*).[10] The Rāmāyaṇa too seems to reflect a similar concept although the references do not make it clear.

§ 91. Before we proceed to the other concept of the *Dharma* as a moral and religious Norm guiding the conduct of the individual with reference to the right and the wrong, we may observe that the ancient Indians conceived it not as an evanescent phenomenon of their era but an eternal force which is handed down from ancient times and whose authority was based on its antiquity. The *Dharma*, the epic qualifies,

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1 NW I, 19, 9.
2 NW II, 99, 17; III, 10, 23; V, 69,12.
3 GE VI, 45, 8.
4 NW II, 118, 23.
5 NW II, 29, 4; II, 90, 11; II, 125 9; VI, 16, 52.
6 NW II, 39, 8.
7 NW I, 23, 16.
8 Shama Sastri: AK I, 1,
9 Cf. Barua: AIB pp. 226-227.
10 Aṅguttara Nikāya III p. 147.

is eternal (*sanātana*)[1] and ancient (*purāṇa*).[2] As Barua points out, it is described as "the good old rule" in the Jātakas which refer to it as *carito purāṇo, dhammo sanantano, cirakālappavatto sabhāvo* (the nature which has existed for a long time) and *porāṇiyā pakati* (the ancient nature).[3] This concept clearly indicates that the *Dharma* was never regarded as an invention of anyone save God himself and that it was a tradition beyond all sectarian differences which developed in the sphere of Indian religions. And hence the significance of the *Dharma* in India which is a universal feature underlying all types of religious thought.

§ 92. A brief analysis of the references to the *Dharma* as an ethical Norm in the Rāmāyaṇa shows that the term is used to convey the meanings of nature or character, morality and merit. When Jaṭāyu told Rāvaṇa that the *Dharma*, whether auspicious or sinful, had the king as its source (*dharmam śubhaṃ vā pāpaṃ vā rājamūlaṃ pravartate*)[4] the reference is to the conduct or the nature which can be good or bad. The same connotation is found in the following contexts: "*Pūrvāpakāriṇaṃ hanyād dharmo'yam tu vidhīyate*" (This *Dharma* enjoins, 'one may kill him who harms first')[5]; living obediently in the husband's house is called the eternal Dharma of good women (*dharmo hy eṣa satstrīṇām eṣa śāśvataḥ*)[6]; and *krūradharmiṇyāḥ kaikeyyāḥ* (of Kaikeyī of a cruel disposition).[7]

§ 93. In the sense of morality the *Dharma* finds numerous references in the epic. The adjectives such as *dhārmika, dharmiṣṭha, dharmanaipuṇa* etc. (VI § 34) signify morality. The *Dharma* violated in the course of adultery or abduction is not any form of social Norm but morality,[8] for the inglorious acts which cut at the very root (*bhavapāyeṣu karmasu mūlaghātiṣu*) are opposed to the *Dharma*.[9] Morality is the *Dharma* of the good people (*satāṃ dharmaḥ*[10] and *sadbhir ācarita*[11]) and is the *Dharma* enjoined to be followed.[12] It is described as a grave responsibility (*dharmadhuraṃ gurvīm*)[13] and as a noose (*dharmapāśa*).[14]

§ 94. The *Dharma* as morality is a code of discipline which in the Buddhist terminology would be the Vinaya. A verse in the Ayodhyākāṇḍa creates an interesting problem as regards the connection between the *Dharma* and the *Vinaya*. It says that Daśaratha was possessed of the *Dharma* and the *Vinaya* (*sampanno dharmeṇa vinayena ca*).[15] One

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1 NW II, 2, 15; II, 19, 72; II, 33, 32; II, 66, 35; VI, 4, 20.
2 NW II, 21, 21; III, 55, 2; II, 25, 10.
3 Barua: AIB p. 229. Jātaka V, p. 479; V, p. 488; III, p. 212; VI, p. 151.
4 NW III, 55, 11.
5 NW II, 110, 24.
6 NW II, 27, 16.
7 NW II, 82, 11.
8 NW III, 36, 11; III, 55, 5.
9 NW V, 47, 13.
10 NW II, 43, 9; II, 92, 5. Cf. Aṅguttara Nikāya (P.T.S.) III, p. 41, 'Sataṃ Dhammaṃ', cited by Wijesekera BSW p. 10.
11 NW II, 68, 5. Cf. also NW III 10, 2.
12 NW II, 58, 17; II, 118, 13; II, 19, 65.
13 NW II, 24, 12.
14 NW I, 1, 26.
15 NW II, 45, 5.

may expect them to be synonymous. They are, however, used in Buddhist texts in referring to various religious systems[1] as the main factors of any religion were the doctrine and the code of discipline of its clergy. Whether the Rāmāyaṇa reflects the Buddhist idiom is doubtful.

§ 95. The Rāmāyaṇa makes it clear that the *Dharma* was conceived as something which should necessarily be resorted to by all.[2] Rāma is said to have abandoned for the sake of the *Dharma* his life, his comforts and his wealth.[3] And Mārīca advised Rāvaṇa that it was not proper to give up the *Dharma* through lust.[4] To fall away from the *Dharma* was to incur popular disapproval.[5] It was the criterion according to which all acts were judged. Daśaratha's act of banishing Rāma was opposed to the *Dharma* and the reputation (*viruddhaṃ dharma-kīrtibhyām*)[6]; and Kausalyā asks sarcastically,"Resorting to what *Dharma* does he wish to banish you?" (*kañ ca dharmaṃ samāśritya tvām asau tyaktum icchati*).[7] Yet Rāma abided by his decision through respect for the *Dharma*[8] because the highest Dharma (*paraṃ dharmaṃ*), according to the wise, was the command of the elders.[9]

§ 96. Further, it was considered to be a great force against which even Rāma was a weakling.[10] It was conceived as capable of protecting and bearing aloft the righteous people. Just as the stanza which says "*Dhammo have rakkhati dhammacārim*"[11] (The Dharma indeed protects the follower of the Dharma), a verse in the Rāmāyaṇa states, "Stability in the *Dharma* is the highest gain. The *Dharma* being borne bears (the bearer)", (*dharmasthitiḥ paro lābho dharmo dhārayate dhṛtaḥ*).[12] Another attributed to Sītā says, "From the *Dharma* rises wealth, from the *Dharma* happiness. Through the *Dharma* one obtains *Svarga*. This world has the *Dharma* as its essence" (*dharmasāram idaṃ jagat*).[13] And Kausalyā in her lamentation glorifies the *Dharma* in a stanza which is reminiscent of the Dhammapada IV, 11, "The fragrance of flowers however spread along the blowing. But that of the men possessed of the *Dharma* blow everywhere" (*vāti gandhaḥ sumanasāṃ prativātaṃ kathaṃcana dharmayuktamanuṣyāṇāṃ vāti gandhaḥ samantatah*).[14] Besides, the *Dharma* has been regarded one of the *puruṣārthas*[15] and as we have already observed the highest of the three generally accepted in the Rāmāyaṇa (VIII § 76).

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1 Saṃyutta Nikāya (P.T.S.) I p. 119; III p. 12.
2 NW II, 53, 28; II, 38, 34.
3 NW III, 54, 24.
4 NW III, 45, 3.
5 NW II, 26, 22; II, 66, 37; III, 61, 33; II, 23, 6-7; II, 49, 25.
6 NW II, 62, 29.
7 NW II, 21, 14.
8 NW II, 25, 2.
9 NW II, 33, 31.
10 NW II, 65, 27.
11 Theragāthā (Oldenberg's edition) p. 35. Cf. also Jātaka I p. 31 and IV, p. 54.
12 NW II, 21, 47.
13 NW III, 10, 25.
14 NW II, 65, 20.
15 NW IV, 14, 4.

§ 97. The Rāmāyaṇa includes two very interesting speeches attributed to Vibhīṣaṇa and Lakṣmaṇa, which adduce facts in support of and against the *Dharma* respectively. The speech of Vibhīṣaṇa, which is however absent in the BE, is as follows: "The *Dharma* is crossed with difficulty by ordinary men just as the ocean is with the arms. Just as desire, anger and other qualities (*bhāvā*) are always the qualities of the Ātman, all are the qualities of the *Dharma* like the happiness of the happy ones. And ignorance (*avijñānam*) in the protection of the *Dharma* is great because to a man with little happiness the whole world is mostly sorrow-stricken. Just as the goal (*nimitta*) is for the easy passage of a ship in the water so is the *Dharma* when well resorted to for the easy passage between the two existences (literally, the worlds). Just like the leader, well-versed in polity, for the organization of the ministers so is the *Dharma* followed well by those desiring the benefits of the *Dharma*. As wealth is utilised by men for the purpose of wealth so the *Dharma* definitely is conducive to happiness of the good in the future. The good *Dharma* cannot be followed with evil intellect by you who craving for the fruit do not see too far. Just as wealth and love bring about happiness and bliss immediately so do forbearance and the *Dharma* increase the joy of the mind. Due to the difficulty in following (*duścarat-vāt*) the *Dharma* some (only of the) people are intent on it; and for those who crave after love and wealth no essence (*antah*) is seen on earth. Where the leader and his companions are virtuous there should be the observation of those desiring the benefits of the *Dharma* (*tatra dharmā-rthakāmānāṃ bhavet saṃyak parīkṣaṇam*)[1].....Lamentable greatly in this world are the great faults devoid of the *Dharma*, knowing which the mind becomes angry."[2]

§ 98. The revolutionary speech of Lakṣmaṇa addressed to Rāma against the *Dharma* should also be taken into consideration. It is true that Lakṣmaṇa is made to utter the facts therein while being under great emotional stress at the sight of the pretended murder of Sītā. It is partially a criticism of the policy of Rāma and is quite similar to his earlier discourse against the belief in fatalism (VII § 24). The facts adduced by Lakṣmaṇa were quite probably those which were current in ancient India at the time reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa. It may be that the author or the authors of the epic culled them from heretical doctrines such as that of the Cārvākas, which refuted the supreme position given to the *Dharma* generally in the religious thought.

§ 99. Lakṣmaṇa's speech is as follows: "The *Dharma* which cannot protect you, who are straightforward, restrained in senses and established in the good path, from calamities is useless. All beings whether stable or moving are visible; but as the *Dharma* is not so my

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1 NW V, 89, 5-7 & 9-15. 2 NW V, 90, 15.

view is that it does not exist. Therefore it is not proper for those like you to resort to the *Dharma* in the same manner as resorting to beings, both stable and moving. If the *Dharma* is true Rāvaṇa should go to hell and you who are possessed of the *Dharma* too should not have come to this calamity. Seeing that he is free of calamities and that you are engrossed in them, I perceive, that *Adharma* (results) from the *Dharma* or else the *Dharma* from the *Adharma*.[1] The result attained by those men who follow virtuous vows (*dharmavratā*) and who yoke themselves to the *Dharma* and by those wicked ones who stick to the *Adharma* is just the same. As (poeple) increase (in prosperity) through wealth, as the *Adharma* is terrible and as the *Dharma* too is calamitous, the *Dharma*, therefore, is useless. If the doer of good deeds is tied with the *Adharma*, O Rāghava, the *Dharma* is killed by the *Adharma*. And being killed what can it do? Or else being disposed (*vihito*) it is killed and it kills the other. Therefore it is defiled by the creator with sinful action. If it is invisible and if it props the sinful acts how can the highest (*paraṃ*) be attained through the *Dharma*, O destroyer of enemies. Or else the *Dharma* abandons the weakling and follows the powerful. My opinion is that the weak *Dharma* which had transgressed its limits should not be resorted to. Or else the *Dharma* is established with its qualities in the powerful. So abandon the *Dharma* and resort to strength as (you resort) to the *Dharma*. Or else the truthful word is thought to be the highest *Dharma;* if so why as your father who was dishonest (*anṛtaḥ*) and devoid of compassion not captured by you? Or else, O Rāghava, that *Dharma* was thought to be liberality and thus due to the *Dharma* you have lost your kingdom."[2] Then Lakṣmaṇa proceeded to recount the significance of wealth (III § 30). In another instance also Lakṣmaṇa criticizes Rāma's attachment to the *Dharma* saying, "That *Dharma* by resorting to which you are bewildered is hated by me" (*so' pi dharmo mama dveṣyo yat prasaṅgād vimuhyasi*).[3]

§ 100. Notwithstanding the criticism of the *Dharma* by Lakṣmaṇa the attitude of the Rāmāyaṇa has been to commend the *Dharma*. As such it disapproves of the *Adharma*. A passage attributed to a minister of Rāvaṇa discusses how the Pitāmaha created the two wings of the *Dharma* and the *Adharma*, as well as truth and falsehood, for the gods and the Asuras respectively. The *Dharma*, it says, is the wing of the gods while the *Adharma* is that of the Asuras. And the *Dharma* is said to swallow up the *Adharma* (*dharmo vai grasate' dhar-*

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1 The reading accepted by Vishva Bandhu in the N.W. i.e. *Dharmeṇopalabhe dharmam adharme vāpy adharmatām is meaningless*. With reference to the variant readings in the Ms. Rā 1, la 1, la 2, ba and a and ra 2, pha and ma, the reading used in this translation i.e. *Dharmeṇopalabhe' dharmam adharmeṇāpi dharmatām*. Cf. NW VI, p. 345.

2 NW VI, 61, 14-28.

3 NW II, 23, 14.

mam)[1]. Rāma as the exponent of the *Dharma* in the epic emphatically stated that he did not need even the earth if obtained through the *Adharma* (*vṛṇomi dharmaṃ na mahīm adharmataḥ*)[2]; and according to the BE he said, "I do not desire even the state of the Śakra through the *Adharma*" (*na hīccheyam adharmeṇa śakratvam api lakṣmaṇa*).[3] A verse in the Northern recensions asserts that Nihilism is the result of the *Adharma;* it says, "When the bridge of the *Dharma* of one who regards the *Dharma* as the foremost is broken, then O Saumitra, nihilism arises in the weakling."[4] The BE in a simile reflects the concept that *Svarga* is unattainable by one whose mind is full of the *Adharma* (*yathā gatiḥ svargam adharmabuddheḥ*).[5] And the Uttarakāṇḍa argues that everything exists on account of the *Dharma* because "When the *Dharma* is destroyed the three worlds with the movables and the immovables along with the hoard of gods and ṛṣis will without doubt be destroyed."[6] The *Adharma* according to the Uttarakāṇḍa is a process of degeneration resulting from the evolution of the Yugas.[7] But the GE once attributes a mind tainted with the *Adharma* to the study of sciences (*adharmakaluṣā buddhir jāyate śāstrasevanāt*).[8]

§ 101. The moral code underlying the concept of the *Dharma* was, as the Rāmāyaṇa indicates, a stringent one. The qualities expected in an ideal individual are a clear index to the standard of perfection conceived by the ancient Indians (IV § 34). Tenderness, honesty (*mārdavārjava*),[9] liberality, virtue, asceticism, restraint,[10] obedience to elders (*guruvṛtti*), compassion, forbearance,[11] effort, perseverance (*utsāhaḥ, pauruṣam*), goodness (*sattvam*), kindness (*ānṛśamsyam*), gratitude,[12] pity (*dayā*), generosity (*tyāga*), truthfulness, non-violence[13] and tending parents[14] are among the ethical principles upheld in the epic.

§ 102. Truthfulness (*satya* and *anṛta*) is discussed in the epic at great length. It is called the highest *Dharma* (*āhuḥ satyaṃ paraṃ dharmam*)[15], and no *Dharma* greater than the truth can be found in the three worlds (*na hi satyāt paro dharmas triṣu lokeṣu vidyate*).[16] In a passage purporting to represent the words of the Svayambhū the truth is glorified as follows: "It is held that a thousand horse sacrifices and truthfulness are equal, for the truth excels even the thousand horse sacrifices. So do the good men guard the truth at the risk of their lives.....From the truth arose Soma; from Soma arose Brahma;

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1 NW VI, 11, 14-16.
2 NW II, 21, 54; II, 26, 26.
3 BE II. 97, 7.
4 NW III, 70, 5 (not BE).
5 BE VI, 14, 10.
6 BE VII, 106, 9-10.
7 BE VII, 74, 15 & 27-28.
8 GE III, 13, 27.
9 NW II, 53, 14.
10 NW III, 9, 7. Cf. NW II, 33, 37.
11 NW II, 103, 34.
12 NW V, 34, 15.
13 NW VI, 8, 34. Cf. NW II, 114, 22; III, 10.
14 NW II, 70, 47.
15 NW II, 15, 3.
16 NW II, 65, 11.

thence Amṛta (=water); from water fire; from fire the earth and from the earth were all beings born. This is the source of emanation (*visarga*) of the beings; this is known to be their re-absorber (*punarāvartaka*). Thus this is the emanator and the gods are established in the truth..... The worlds attained by men who follow the vow of truthfulness with one truth cannot be attained by liars after performing a hundred sacrifices.....Two paths are advocated by the good, namely the truth and non-violence where the *Dharma* is well established."[1]

§ 103. In a similar passage Rāma taught Jābāli the significance of the truth. "The truth and kindness", it says, "are the eternal conduct of the kings. Therefore the kingdom is of the nature of the truth; the world is established in the truth. The sages and the gods think of the truth alone; for in this world a man who speaks the truth attains the immutable highest (*param.....akṣayam*). (The people) shrink away from the man who speaks falsehood as if from a snake. The *Dharma* based on the truth (*dharmaḥ satyaparo*) is said to be the root of everything in the world. The truth is the lord in the world; the *Dharma* is always associated with it. All have the truth as the root and there is no greater state than the truth. Gifts, sacrifices, asceticism and the Vedas are based on the truth (*satyapratiṣṭhānāḥ*); therefore one should be intent on the truth."[2]

§ 104. Opposed to morality were the sins (*pāpa* and *duṣkṛta*).[3] A comprehensive list of sinful acts is found in the Ayodhyākāṇḍa forming the "*śapatha*" of Bharata; herein Bharata cursed that the person who approved of Rāma's exile should become guilty of all sins ranging from the abusing of the Vedas to living in a village of evil-doers.[4] The sin, according to the Rāmāyaṇa, is disliked by the *Āryas* and is not conducive to heaven (*anāryajuṣṭam asvargyam*).[5] The epic too seems to uphold the general theory of associating sins with the body, the mind and the word. In the Uttarakāṇḍa Vālmīki handing over Sītā to Rāma said that he had never committed a sin with mind, deed or word. But the Rāmāyaṇa does not classify the evil deeds according to these three sources in the manner that Buddhist texts[6] and the Dharmaśāstras[7] do. A verse in Rāma's speech to Jābāli indicates that the association of sin with the three sources were conceived differently in the epic; it says, "One commits a sin with the body and thinks of it with the mind. (Then) he tells a lie with tongue. Thus an evil act is threefold" (*kāyena kurute pāpam manasā sampradhārya yaḥ anṛtam jihvayā cāha trividham*

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1 NW II, 65, 10-13; 16; 18.
2 BE II, 109. 10-14; GE II, 118, 11-17.
3 NW II, 66, 34 & 37; II, 70, 11 & 40; II, 78, 51; V, 16, 4; II, 69, 3; III, 77, 20.
4 NW II, 83, 3-24.
5 NW II, 92, 13.
6 Tachibana: *Ethics of Buddhism* p. 68.
7 Cf. Manusmṛti: XII, 3-9.

karmapātakam).[1] It was believed that the retribution for a sinful act would come to a sinner within a short time (*na cirāt prāpyate loke pāpāṇāṃ karmanām phalam*).[2]

§ 105. Finally we may examine the references to the *Dharma* in the sense of merit — the resultant of a good deed. Sītā told Rāma, "The perfect *Dharma* is obtained with effort by tormenting the self with restraint and truthfulness. No happiness is obtained from happiness."[3] An act is judged on the basis whether its result is the *Dharma* and fame.[4] The epic, further, uses the term "*dharma*" in apposition to "*iṣṭāpūrta*" in the sense of merit.[5] In the Uttarakāṇḍa Rāma is said to increase the *Dharma* in many ways with sacrifices (*yajñair bahuvidhaṃ dharmam vardhamānasya sarvadā*).[6] A similar concept is traceable in Śiva's statement to Madhu, "This incomparable and auspicious *Dharma* which wins over my grace (has been attained) by you" (*tvayāyam atulo dharmo matprasādakarah śubhah*).[7] Somewhat ambiguous is the word *dharma* in the expressions *dharmaphala*[8] and *dharmanirjitaṃ lokam*[9] for it can mean both morality and the result of meritorious deeds. And to convey the sense of merit the epic uses the terms *puṇya* which from the root *pu* signifies purification,[10] and *sukṛta* which means "well-done".[11]

§ 106. The foregoing paragraphs deal with the data on the concepts of *Dharma* and morality in the Rāmāyaṇa. Though the references are scrappy and the information which could be derived from them is necessarily sketchy the epic does prove that the concept of the *Dharma* had become a complex one at the time reflected by it including many if not all of the aspects, which it acquired in Indian religions in the course of time. The Rāmāyaṇa, it is seen from these references, can rightly be regarded a book on the *Dharma* despite its secular nature. It is the worldly *Dharma* — a code of social ethics — which the epic expounds not only in the direct utterances and statements but also by the delineation of the characters. And the contemporary literature also shows us that morality was a special concern of the people of ancient India.

E. Asceticism

§ 107. We have observed that the Āśrama system which was current in ancient India necessitated that a part of a man's life was to be spent in the forest as a *Vānaprastha* (IV § 40). We also discussed the data contained in the Rāmāyaṇa about their daily life (III § 26 ff). These

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1 GE II, 118, 21; BE II, 109, 21.
2 NW II, 34, 9.
3 NW III, 10, 26.
4 NW III, 55, 19; VI, 100, 40.
5 NW I, 19, 10.
6 BE VII, 99, 19.
7 BE VII, 61, 7.
8 NW V, 47, 30.
9 NW II, 64, 6.
10 NW II, 59, 10; II, 43, 31 & 32; II, 72, 3; III, 16, 26; BE VII, 17, 20; VII, 8, 4.
11 NW II, 42, 35; BE VII, 19, 29; VII, 20, 31.

Vānaprasthas who lived in hermitages[1] in the heart of forests sometimes called *Tapovana*[2] (forests for asceticism) represented not merely an aspect of the social organization of the ancient Indians but also a very important feature of their religious life. The references to religious practices and concepts in the Rāmāyaṇa, which have been discussed in the foregoing sections of this Chapter, make it clear that the *Dharma* which was the highest spiritual ideal was attainable as a householder. No definite statement is found in the epic to the effect that a life other than the lay life was considered essential for the highest spiritual attainment. In fact we have seen that the Vānaprastha stage was not enforced; it was generally left to the discretion of the individual (IV § 41). Yet the ideal of physical and psychological restraint which according to Indian ethics was fundamental called for a mode of life free from the cares and the tribulations of that of a householder. The order of asceticism was the answer to this demand.

§ 108. The ascetic order by the time reflected in the Rāmāyaṇa was definitely a well-established religious system. It should have had a long history by that time to have possessed a code of practices which determined the place of dwelling, the dress, the food and so forth of an ascetic (III §§ 26 ff). The Rāmāyaṇa reveals that the ascetics of ancient India had not only perfected numerous practices to attain spiritual bliss but also had made use of the efficacy of asceticism for many purposes. The data, on the subject in the epic, therefore, are full of interest.

§ 109. Asceticism was conceived as a process of training the self and hence the successful ascetic is called a *Bhāvitātman* (one whose self is trained)[3], or a *Saṃyatātman* (one whose self is restrained).[4] He is one who had conquered his sense-organs (*jitendriya*)[5], his anger (*jitakrodha*)[6] and sometimes his sexual passion (*jitamaithuna*).[7] An ascetic was normally expected to be celibate. The epic describes ascetics as *Brahmacārins*[8] and Virādha and Kabandha criticized Rāma as a follower of the *Adharma* and a defiler of the *Dharma* because he became an ascetic along with his wife[9] (*sabhāryasya vane vāsaḥ sarvathā dharmadūṣanaḥ*). But instances of ascetics marrying and seducing damsels are not altogether absent in Indian folk tales.[10] *Svādhyāya*[11] (Vedic study) and *Niyama*[12] (probably the Yogic stage of detachment) formed a special feature of the spiritual life of the ascetics whose attain-

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1 NW VI, 106, 34.
2 NW II, 48, 20; II, 58, 15; VI, 53, 104.
3 NW II, 47, 14; II, 104, 32.
4 NW III, 80, 13.
5 NW III, 80, 12; IV, 9, 17; BE VII, 2, 8; VII, 9, 39.
6 NW I, 47, 25.
7 NW I, 39, 14 (not BE)
8 NW I, 33, 3; I, 30, 36; IV, 42, 10; BE VII, 19, 15.
9 NW III, 5, 13; III, 76, 38 (not BE & GE).
10 Cf. BE VII, 2, 27.
11 BE VII, 2, 8; VII, 3, 2; VII, 9, 39; VII, 10, 8.
12 NW V, 28, 2; BE VII, 3, 11.

ments were apparently Yogic (Cf. *Dhyānayoga*, *Divyayoga etc.*)[1]. Besides these and other common practices such as bathing regularly, worshipping the fire and performing sacrifices the ascetics seem to have performed austere penances of which a large number are mentioned in the epic; some of the references occur in the Bāla and the Uttara Kāṇḍas. But their antiquity cannot, however, be altogether denied on that ground.

§ 110. To live at the feet of trees (*vṛkṣamūlika*) was an act of penance.[2] Viśvāmitra observed the vow of silence (*maunavrata*) which according to the BE he continued for a thousand years.[3] Certain ascetics adopted various postures in standing and stuck to them for long periods. The epic mentions those who stood motionless like pillars (*sthānuvat*)[4], who stood upside-down (*adhomukham*)[5], who stood on the toes or on one toe as the ascetics at Śarabhaṅga's hermitage,[6] who stood on one foot,[7] who stayed with their arms raised up (*ūrdhvabāhu*)[8] and with their arms on the head (*ūrdhvaśirobāhu*)[9], and who stood with feet on a tree (*vṛkṣasaktāgrapādaḥ*).[10] Besides, there were ascetics who carried weapons (*astradhārin*) quite likely stuck on their bodies,[11] who wore wet clothes (*udavasānaḥ*)[12], who slept on rocks (*śilāśayaḥ*)[13], on bare ground (*sthaṇḍilaśāyin*)[14] and in water during the cold seasons of Hemanta and Śiśira,[15] who did not sleep at all (*aśayyāḥ*)[16], who spent the rainy season in the open air[17] and who sat amidst five fires[18] in the hot season or amidst ten fires[19] (*pañca-tapāḥ* and *daśatapāḥ*).

§ 111. Fasting and limiting food also were resorted to by ascetics. The Rāmāyaṇa refers to ascetics who fasted for long periods,[20] who took food once in seven days (*saptarātrakṛtāhārāḥ*)[21] or in four months (*caturmāsakṛtāhārāḥ*),[22] who drank water only (*abbhakṣa*)[23], who thrived on air (*vāyubhakṣa*)[24], who ate leaves which had fallen (*śīrṇa-parṇakṛtāhārāḥ*)[25], fruit[26] and mustard.[27] Further, there were ascetics who ate only what fell into their hands and mouths (*hastādaḥ* and *mukhā-*

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1 NW I, 71, 44; II, 104, 11.
2 NW V, 8, 47; V, 8, 50 & 51.
3 NW I, 61, 1; BE I, 65, 2.
4 NW I, 40, 2; I, 59, 30; I, 61, 1.
5 BE VII, 75, 14.
6 NW I, 40, 1; I, 50, 13; III, 7, 7.
7 NW I, 59, 29; BE VII, 10, 6.
8 NW I, 40, 2; I, 50, 13; I, 59, 29; BE, VII, 89, 10.
9 BE VII, 10, 8.
10 NW III, 7, 6.
11 NW III, 7, 5.
12 NW III, 7, 5.
13 NW III, 12, 12.
14 NW III, 7, 4.
15 NW I, 39, 14; I, 59, 31; IV, 9, 16. BE VII, 3, 12; VII, 10, 4; VII, 88, 10.
16 BE III, 6, 3.
17 NW I, 39, 14; I,59, 30; BE VII,10,4.
18 NW I, 39, 13; I, 59, 30; III, 7, 5; BE VII, 10, 4. Cf. NW II, 113, 4.
19 NW III, 7, 3.
20 NW III, 7, 6; BE VII, 3, 12; VII, 10, 10.
21 NW IV, 9, 17.
22 NW III, 7, 6.
23 NW I, 47, 25; III, 7, 2 & 8; BE II, 6, 4.
24 NW I, 40, 2; I, 47, 25; I, 59, 30; III, 7, 2 & 8; III, 12, 12; IV, 9, 17.
25 NW I, 39, 14; I, 47, 25; III, 7, 3; V, 8, 51.
26 NW III, 7, 8; V, 8, 51.
27 NW III, 7, 8.

daḥ),[1] and who used their mouths to grind corn (*dantolūkhalin*).[2] It is possible that penances of similar nature were undertaken by the ascetics as their *Vratas*.[3]

§ 112. Asceticism (*tapas*) is expounded in the epic as a great power capable of accomplishing a variety of tasks. The Rāmāyaṇa refers to a number of instances to illustrate it. Paraśurāma knew about Rāma through his *dhyānayoga*[4] while Agastya knew about him through the power of his asceticism (*tapasaś ca prabhāveṇa*)[5]. Bharadvāja obtained food for Bharata and his army by resorting to *divyayoga*[6] and death of beings was averted by the asceticism of Agastya and others.[7] Anasūyā used her ascetic powers to produce yams and fruit, to change the course of the Ganges and to condense ten nights into one.[8] The power of the ascetics of Saptajana's hermitage was so great that the hermitage could not be attacked even by gods with Indra; birds and all other wild animals avoided it for whoever went there could never return.[9] Śabarī pointed out to Rāma that the flowers of the Mataṅga-vana had not faded and the Kuśa grass had not dried due to the power of asceticism.[10] Indrajit is said to be protected by his asceticism (*tapasā cābhirakṣitaḥ*)[11], while Hanumat attributed his success in Laṅkā to Sītā's ascetic power (*tapobalāt*)[12]; and he further thought that the world was borne aloft by her asceticism.[13] It is associated with creation.[14] Viśvāmitra considered his asceticism efficacious enough to send Triśanku to heaven with his body; he said, "Through the glory (*tejasā*) of asceticism acquired well by me from my young days may you go with your body to heaven."[15] In short even the gods could be made to serve a human being through asceticism.[16] The gods were believed to be opposed to the acquisition of ascetic power by the people. Many legends deal with the theme of gods sending down Apsaras to disturb the penance of ascetics.[17] Indra is said to relish the idea of distracting ascetics from penance (Cf. *indrapriyam*)[18] and the gods are said to ensure their welfare by doing so (*surāṇām arthasiddhaye*)[19].

§ 113. The powers of asceticism had been considered so divergent that it was resorted to for various purposes by the characters of the Rāmāyaṇa. The motives which had urged them to practice austere penances and the results obtained thereby give us a fair index to the

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1 NW V, 8, 47; Cf. Commy. on BE V, 13, 38.
2 NW III, 7, 3.
3 NW II, 7, 4; III, 1, 41; III, 80, 10.
4 NW I, 71, 44.
5 NW III, 18, 7.
6 NW II, 104, 11.
7 NW III, 14, 11.
8 NW III, 1, 43-44.
9 NW IV, 9, 18-19.
10 NW III, 80, 25.
11 NW V, 44, 4.
12 NW V, 56, 144.
13 NW V, 57, 3.
14 NW V, 42, 7; VI, 81, 76. Cf. NW V, 77, 18.
15 NW I, 56, 13-14.
16 NW III, 6, 23.
17 NW I, 59, 4-5; I, 59, 20-21; 32-33; III, 12, 14.
18 NW I, 59, 17.
19 NW III, 12, 14.

development of the concept of asceticism which to begin with might have been a means of attaining emancipation. The magical or rather the mystic significance which the Rāmāyaṇa data reveal might have grown around the original cult in the course of time. But at the time reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa both aspects had merged together so closely that it is not quite possible to dissociate them.

§ 114. Asceticism was believed to cleanse one of his sins (*taponirdhūtakalmaṣāḥ*)[1] and ensure happy states after death,[2] the *Brahmaloka* being a special achievement of the ascetics.[3] Śambūka became an ascetic in order to win over heaven and he is said to have attained it[4] while Dilīpa did penance to get down Ganges but attained *Svarga*.[5] Boons could be obtained, it was thought, by pleasing the gods — especially Brahmā.[6] Further, ascetic practices appear to have been resorted to in order to obtain progeny.[7] Some heroes were supposed to have received their strength through asceticism.[8] Viśvāmitra attained the state of a Brahmarṣi (i.e. changed his caste!) by doing penance[9] while Mandakarṇi in a similar manner became young.[10] So did Kuvera obtain the Puṣpaka from Pitāmaha.[11] Further, the epic narrates how Viśvāmitra did penance to heal his left eye which was injured.[12] And Rāma fasted (*upavāsa*) on the eve of his coronation in order to obtain prosperity, fame and the kingdom (*śrīyaśorājyalābhāya*).[13]

§ 115. In analysing the Rāmāyaṇa data on the mode of ascetic practices and their recognized efficacy a problem which occurs to the student is whether such severe penances were practised in ancient India for such purposes. The accounts sound so mythical that one feels that the concept of asceticism like the beliefs in the supernatural should not be taken too seriously. But such an attitude would be unfair as asceticism in ancient India was a serious aspect of religion. Associated with the Yoga it was resorted to as a means of emancipating one's self from the sorrows of *Saṃsāra*. Practically all religious sects of India including Buddhism and Jainism did believe in its efficacy. Though the self-mortification implied in the types of penances in the foregoing paragraphs was not approved of by the Buddha the yogic element in asceticism formed a basic feature in the course of training promulgated by the Buddha.

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1 NW I. 21, 16.
2 NW VI, 92, 24; I, 53, 2; BE III, 35, 20; II, 54, 31; GE II, 118, 30.
3 NW III, 6, 23; BE VII, 78, 10.
4 BE VII, 76, 3.
5 NW I, 39, 5.
6 NW I, 39, 15-17; III, 78, 7; IV, 42, 13; VI, 63, 13; VI, 71, 24 & 25; I, 50, 12.
7 NW I, 23, 5; I, 35, 6; I, 42, 3-6; II, 25, 3; II, 52, 10; III, 74, 4.
8 NW III, 36, 18-19; III, 74, 11; VI, 52, 35; BE VII, 5, 9-11; III, 3, 6.
9 NW I, 16, 28-29.
10 NW III, 12, 16.
11 NW V, 5, 24.
12 BE VII, 13, 22-31.
13 NW II, 7, 2.

§ 116. It appears from the Rāmāyaṇa that the mystical element is more emphasized therein. The epic in this respect may be representing a contemporary trend in the concept of asceticism. Or else the legends upholding the supernatural results of ascetic practices might have been postulated by certain groups which sought to promote asceticism and like the Buddhist Jātakas which drive home the theory of Karma these too served to elucidate the mystico-religious significance of asceticism. Whatever be the origin of the data available in the Rāmāyaṇa they are sufficient to prove the existence of a number of ascetic practices of the most austere order in ancient India.

F. Rites and Sacrifices

§ 117. It is an established fact that the ancient Indian religion had sacrifice in some form or other as its primary feature. The Saṃhitās are sufficiently illustrative of this fact although the most flagrant instances signifying the supremacy of sacrifice as a religious institution are to be found in the Brāhmaṇas. These voluminous texts elaborating the scheme of sacrifices and elevating it to the rank of the world principle are themselves a testimony to the importance attached to ritual by the ancient Indians. Notwithstanding the lack of encouragement by the thinkers of the Upaniṣadic circles and by the reformist teachers such as the Buddha, sacrifice as the basis of the Indian religion did continue to be popular. Despite all criticisms the Sūtras came to be composed in order to facilitate the study of the technique of sacrifice and the priest—the Brahman — on the whole spared no pains in maintaining the ritualistic tradition which not only ensured him a lucrative source of income but also spiritual prestige. The plethora of legends and myths created by him to illustrate the efficacy of sacrifice left few unconvinced; besides, the political position of the Brahman as the *Purohita* of the king gave him further opportunities to encourage his patron to perform sacrifices. Thus in no part of India where Brahmans maintained a fair degree of social prestige was sacrifice relegated to the background.

§ 118. It is such a situation as this that the Rāmāyaṇa depicts. Rites and sacrifices were given a prominent place in the religious life of the people. The performance of sacrifices was apparently considered an important feature of a city; the Bāla Kāṇḍa describes Ayodhyā as scented pleasantly with the fragrance of incense, garlands and sacrificial oblations (*dhūpamālyahavirgandhair hṛdyaiś caivādhivāsitām*).[1] And Laṅkā looked like a place of sacrifice (*yajñabhūmi*) on account of the smoke from fire-altars and the smell of milk used in rites.[2] Further, Hanumat heard in Laṅkā the recitations of Vedic texts (*brahmaghoṣān*)

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1 NW I, 5, 17.

2 NW V, 11, 36.

of Brahmarakṣasas well-versed in the six Vedāṅgas and engaged in sacrificial sessions (*sattriṇām*)[1]. It was an obligation on the part of the layman to have sacrifices performed. Once Jābāli enumerated the obligations on the part of the living to the dead and what appears to be a traditional list has sacrifice as the first i.e. *yajasva dehi dīkṣasva tapas tapyasva santyaja.*[2]

§ 119. The Rāmāyaṇa, which, unlike the books on theory' depicts the actual life rather than the ideal, shows us clearly that the ancient Indian went through a series of daily rites. He began his day with the performance of the morning rites, during which he bathed, worshipped the dawn and muttered a prayer[3] (VIII § 24). The prayer used in connection with this rite was no doutb the Sāvitrī or the Gāyatrī hymn which is mentioned in the epic only in a simile as beyond the reach of an untouchable (i.e. *Sāvitrī vṛṣalair iva*).[4] The Rāmāyaṇa gives one the impression that all members of the three higher castes performed this simple rite most scrupulously. And the same procedure seems to have been adopted in worshipping the dusk (*paścimāṃ sandhyām*).[5] The worship of the two twilights was considered so important a religious act that the defaulter was regarded as committing a great sin; hence did Bharata in cursing the person who approved of Rāma's banishment state that he would incur the sin of the man who sleeps at both twilights (*ubhe sandhye śayānasya yatpāpam parikalpitam*).[6]

§ 120. Besides this rite which quite clearly is associated with sun-worship, the ancient Indians performed with equal devotion the rite of tending the fire. Every householder was expected to be a propitiator of the fire or literally "one who had placed the sacred fire on the altar" (*āhitāgni*)[7] and as a sign of prosperity and perfection of the reign of Daśaratha it is said that it lacked people who did not tend the fire.[8] This rite known as *Agnihotra*,[9] according to the Rāmāyaṇa, formed an important aspect of the activities of a hermitage and all the great sages of the epic — i.e. Atri, Śarabhaṅga, Agastya, Bharadvāja — are described as intent on the rite of *Agnihotra.*[10] Quite likely every house had its fire-altar just as the one described in the Rāmāyaṇa as seen by Bharata in Rāma's home.[11]

§ 121. In addition to these daily rites the Rāmāyaṇa mentions a number of special ceremonies performed usually by the laymen them-

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1 NW V, 13, 2.
2 NW II, 12, 15.
3 NW I, 21, 3; I, 2, 10-11; III, 14, 25; II, 99, 22; I, 22, 2; I, 32, 2; BE VII, 36, 61; VII, 34, 29.
4 NW II, 92, 18.
5 NW I, 29, 19; BE III, 7, 23; VII, 82, 2; VII, 81, 21-22. Cf. Manusmṛti: II, 77-78.
6 NW II, 83, 22.
7 Monier-Williams: *Skt-Eng. Dict.*, *s.v. āhitāgni.*
8 NW I, 6, 13. Cf. NW II, 46, 5.
9 NW IV, 36, 39; II, 44, 9; BE VII, 24, 10.
10 NW III, 3, 28; III, 6, 20; III, 16, 24; II, 105, 2.
11 NW II, 113, 23.

selves. The *Kautakamaṅgala*[1] was apparently a ceremony serving as a preliminary for some propitious occasion. Normally it preceded the marriage rites;[2] but the epic has it as a rite performed by Rāma before he left for the palace of Daśaratha anticipating his consecration. A farewell ceremony performed at the time reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa was called the *Svastyayana* which literally means "an auspicious journey."[3] A short description of it is found in the Ayodhyākāṇḍa where Kausalyā bade farewell to Rāma with such a ceremony: she worshipped the gods and offered to them oblations (*bali*), flowers and incense; she gave Rāma the remnants of the incense, flowers and oblations and recited hymns (*mantra*); and she tied on his right arm some herb which was believed to destroy Rākṣasas (*rakṣoghnīṃ oṣadhīm*)[4]. This semi-religious and semi-magical rite was no doubt one of the many benedictory cults traditionally handed down from generation to generation and their survivals are still traceable in the household ceremonies highly treasured by especially the women-folk in both India and Ceylon.

§ 122. The offering of *Bali* or oblation to the spirits may be a special rite, but the data of the epic do not give us a definite idea of its significance. From one reference it appears as if *bali* was regularly offered to spirits before taking one's meals; in the forest Rāma is said to have given as *bali* the best portion of the meat.[5] Another citation seems to imply a particular rite performed at home (*gṛheṣu balikarmāṇi*). Mālyavān observes that the departed ones ate them.[6] One may wonder whether this rite has any connection with the magical cult of the same name current in Ceylon.

§ 123. Even if *balikarma* cannot be related to the *bali* ceremony of Ceylon the *Śānti* performed to divert Bharata is undoubtedly similar to it. This is referred to only in the Southern Recension and the expression is *śāntim lāsyanti* — "they dance an appeasement."[7] One may argue with sufficient justification that this occurs in the Southern Recension only because it was a cult peculiar to South India, for there exists even today in this area and also in Ceylon a sort of magical dance ritual which is called *Śānti* (Cf. Sinhalese *set-śāntiya*). The epic expression strongly favours its association with these dance rituals.

§ 124. Another form of *Śāntikarma*[8] was performed as a house-warming ceremony. The BE calls it the ceremony of appeasing the site (*vāstuśamanīyāni maṅgalāni*)[9] and describes it as an animal sacrifice. When Rāma built a new hut at Citrakūṭa he directed Lakṣmaṇa to kill a black antelope and sacrifice its flesh at the fire while he after a

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1 NW II, 17, 22.
2 Cf. BE I, 73, 11.
3 NW I, 20, 2; II, 28, 19 & 42; II, 29, 1; VI, 63, 31; VI, 74, 8.
4 NW II, 28, 17-19.
5 NW II, 109, 37.
6 NW VI, 11, 33.
7 BE II, 69, 4.
8 NW III, 20, 22.
9 BE II, 56, 31.

bath chanted incantations.[1] This is clearly a magic rite and the *mantras* used therein might in all probability have been Atharva Veda hymns such as III, 12, 3 etc. A similar cult associated with agriculture was known as the *Navagryāṇapūjā*.[2] The epic mentions it as a ceremony performed during the autumn in honour of the *Pitṛdevatās*.

§ 125. Besides these the Rāmāyaṇa refers to a large number of the Vedic sacrifices. Certain details as regards the mode in which they were performed are also available; but to a student of the Indian ritual these are of less importance because they differ in no way from the principles laid down in those voluminous works on sacrifice, i.e. the Brāhmaṇas. It is, however, worthwhile noting down here the types of sacrifices mentioned in the epic. They are, in the order of the Kāṇḍas, *Aśvamedha*,[3] *Bahusuvarṇaka*,[4] *Naramedha*,[5] *Rājasūya*,[6] *Sarvamedha*,[7] *Jāruthya*, *Puṇḍarīka*,[8] *Vājapeya*,[9] *Gomedha*,[10] *Gosava*, *Atirātra*,[11] *Mahāprāsthanika*[12] and *Sautrāmaṇi*.[13] The fact that these were performed at the time reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa is practically the only information derivable from the epic references.

§ 126. Yet on the *Rājasūya* sacrifice we have in the Uttarakāṇḍa an interesting account. Rāma told his brothers his intention to perform a *Rājasūya* sacrifice; he said, "It is my opinion that the Rājasūya is an imperishable and immutable bridge of *Dharma* (*dharmasetu*). I desire to perform it which is based on the *Dharma* and which destroys all sins."[14] This proposal was vehemently opposed by Bharata who pointed out that the Rājasūya sacrifice only led to the destruction of royal dynasties in the world (*pṛthivyām rājavaṃśānāṃ vināśo yatra dṛśyate*). He further illustrates from legends and myths that the performance of the *Rājasūya* had culminated in numerous wars where the warriors destroyed one another.[15] And in preference to this Rāma and his brothers decide to perform an *Aśvamedha*. Whether this represents a general antipathy towards the Rājasūya sacrifice or else only an opinion of an individual cannot be ascertained. But it is worthwhile noting that the passage occurs in a very late portion of the Rāmāyaṇa.

§ 127. Rāmāyaṇa upholds the Vedic ritual and on the whole comments on it most favourably. None of the anti-ritualistic traits of Buddhism or Jainism find any reference in the epic. But it must be noted that the major portion of the data on sacrifice—especially on its

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1 BE II, 56, 22-32.
2 NW III, 21, 6.
3 NW I, 1, 93; I, 8, 2; II, 114, 4; II, 65, 10; VI, 110, 12; BE VII, 25, 8.
4 NW I, 1, 93; BE VII, 25, 8.
5 NW I, 57, 6; 14-15; I, 58, 19.
6 NW II, 114, 4; BE VII, 83, 4 ff.
7 NW IV, 36, 40.
8 NW VI, 110, 12.
9 NW VI, 110, 12; BE VII, 109, 2.
10 BE VII, 25, 8.
11 BE VII, 99, 9.
12 BE VII, 109, 3.
13 NW VII, 101, 10.
14 BE VII, 83, 4-5.
15 BE VII, 83, 13-15; NW VII, 85, 14-17.

efficacy—is located in the first and the seventh kāṇḍas which besides being late reveal a strong Brahmanical bias. It is therefore interesting to observe that three verses, one of which occurs exclusively in the NW, prefer morality to sacrifice. The truth (*satya*) is regarded to be greater than a thousand *aśvamedhas*.[1] And it is further stated that the worlds attained with one truth cannot be gained even with a thousand sacrifices (*iṣṭvā kratuśatair api*).[2] The verse in the NW, attributed to Rāma, contends that the merits acquired by giving refuge to one who is frightened cannot be rivalled even by the complete (*suparyāptam*) merits of an *Aśvamedha*.[3] But these hints can in no way be construed as representing an attitude against sacrifices. Actually the epic represents an age or at least a society which favoured rites and sacrifices and wherein not only the traditional Vedic ritual but also the popular magic rites thrived.

G. Death and Funeral Rites

§ 128. The attitude of a people to death is guided more often than not by the attitude to life. And always we are apt to meet in a society holders of diabolically opposed views on both. Generally speaking there. are the worldly ones who quite instinctively manifest a keen desire to live and the idealists who philosophize on the uselessness of life and the inevitability of death. The Rāmāyaṇa, too, represents both these. Vibhīṣaṇa, for instance, proclaimed that life is extremely difficult to be obtained (*sudurlabhaṃ jīvitam*).[4] And Yayāti when he was made an old man complained that he had not accomplished what ought to be accomplished in the sphere of sensuality (*na tāvat kṛtakṛtyo'smi viṣayeṣu nararṣabha*).[5] Moreover, the *Phalaśruti* of the epic as a whole speaks of the worldly craving to live and live comfortably. What are the gifts promised to the devout reader of the Rāmāyaṇa? Those desiring sons and wealth will have them. Young girls will get attractive husbands and women will give birth to sons. And all will have long lives.[6] These aspirations characterize a zest for life, which can in no way be associated with the pessimistic trends observed in Indian religious and philosophical thought. The life the average man yearned for is no doubt one of sensual satisfaction as is vouched for by a verse—though of a late canto—which says, "All doers of good acts, being intent on sensual pleasure (*ratiparāyaṇāḥ*) live with their women, with their sensual desires gratified (*kāma samṛddhārthā*)".[7] To one with such inclinations death might have been a misery.

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1 NW II, 65, 10.
2 NW II, 65, 16.
3 NW V, 93, 16 (not GE or BE)
4 NW V, 80, 29.
5 BE VII, 59, 3.
6 NW VI, 110, 16-31.
7 NW IV, 36, 108.

§ 129. But the idealist did not regard it so. The epic shows that he considered death to be the inevitable end of human life. It was for him the normal path which is certain (*prākṛto mārgaḥ.....dhruvaḥ*)[1] or the goal of all being[2] or the assigned route (*diṣṭāṃ gatim*).[3] In Rāma's speech on the death of his father the epic includes numerous philosophical arguments to prove that death is inevitable and that it is futile to grieve over it[4] (IX § 46).

§ 130. Besides these two groups there was also a third which found life not worth living. As such suicide appears to have been resorted to by certain people as a result of either emotional upset or religious conviction. In the Rāmāyaṇa we hear of threats to commit suicide by people who are either put into uncomfortable and miserable situations or placed in awkward positions on account of failure and so forth.[5] From these it appears that the usual means of committing suicide in ancient India reflected by the epic were entering a pyre or setting fire to one's self,[6] drowning one's self in a river or lake,[7] swallowing poison,[8] and hanging one's self (*rajjum baddhvāthavā kaṇṭhe*).[9]

§ 131 The Rāmāyaṇa refers only to two instances of religious suicide and in both the subjects enter the fire. Śarabhaṅga set fire to himself and he described his act to Rāma as a sacrifice of his limbs (Cf. *yāvaj juhomi gātrāṇi*).[10] The expression which describes Śabarī's suicide also suggests that it was considered to be a sacrifice; the verse states, "being approved by Rāma she sacrificed herself in the fire (*hutvātmānam hutāśane*) and went to heaven with a resplendent body."[11] Hopkins seems to regard these allusions as significant because they negate what he considers to be "the general epic rule"—i.e. "a man who kills himself (*ātmahā pumān*) does not go to heaven."[12] It is clear that two levels of thought are represented by these notions and the view that suicide was a sacred act might have been in all probability current among certain ascetics who, it appears from a verse in the BE, regarded it a meritorious deed comparable with a gift of a thousand cows or tending elders: the hermit whose son was killed by Daśaratha wished that his son experienced the bliss attained by the givers of a thousand cows, by those who tend elders and who had cast away their bodies (*dehanyāsakṛtām*).[13]

§ 132. We may here examine the data on the disposal of the dead in ancient India. The Rāmāyaṇa seems to represent three modes viz:

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1 NW II, 119, 16.
2 BE II, 72, 15.
3 BE II, 103, 8.
4 NW II, 119, 3-8.
5 NW III, 50, 36; BE VII, 58, 19; NW V, 8, 53.
6 NW V, 8, 53; III, 50, 36; BE II, 74, 33; VII, 58, 19.
7 NW III, 50, 36; V, 8, 53; BE VII, 58, 19.
8 NW III, 50, 36; BE VII, 58, 19.
9 BE II, 74, 33.
10 NW III, 6, 30-34.
11 NW III, 80, 33.
12 Hopkins: JAOS XXI pp. 149-150.
13 BE II, 64, 44.

cremation, burial and exposure. The first appears to have been the commonest and all ritual had grown around it. The disposal of the dead by burying is said to be the custom of the Rākṣasas. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa buried Virādha because of his request, "My body, O Rāma, should be put in a pit. It is the ancient *Dharma* as regards dead Rākṣasas. And eternal are the worlds of those who are buried."[1] But it is interesting to note that Rāvaṇa, the king of the Rākṣasas, was cremated according to the Aryan rites. Two Indian writers have attempted to account for this apparent anomaly. P. C. Dharma thinks that "Rāvaṇa was cremated as he was a Brahman by birth."[2] This however is a bit too far-fetched. G. Ramdas, on the other hand, sees in this the beginning of the Aryanisation of the Rākṣasas. He says, "It was only by treating the dead body of their leader according to the proposed system that the whole organization of the Rākṣasas could be altered."[3] There is, no doubt, some truth in Ramdas' statement. It may be that the author of the epic desired to represent the infiltration of Aryan customs into the Rākṣasa society as a result of Rāma's exploits and found the funeral rites of Rāvaṇa a fitting occasion to show Aryan influence.

§ 133. The data regarding the exposure of the dead are extremely flimsy. There is actually just one verse—more or less of the didactic type—which states that carnivorous beasts, literally the eaters of carcases (*kravyādāḥ*) do not eat the dead body of the ungrateful man" (*tān mṛtān api kravyādāḥ kṛtaghnān nopabhuñjate*).[4] The implication here is that the dead bodies were exposed so that the beasts might feed upon them. This custom was current in certain parts of the world. The old Persian practice of *Dakma* was similar to this. In India itself it appears that such a custom prevailed. The Buddhist texts are familiar with it as is evident from the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya, which describes the stages through which a dead body goes when cast in a cemetery (*sīvathikāya chadditam*) and gives as one the stage when it is eaten by crows, hawks, vultures, dogs and jackals. From the Buddhist data one may come to the conclusion that this practice was prevalent in eastern India. In that case it is interesting to note that the Rāmāyaṇa has at least one reference to it thus establishing that the epic is conversant with the customs of eastern India.

§ 134. Cremation was an elaborate ceremony. The Rāmāyaṇa provides a wealth of data on this form of disposal of the dead insofar as four funerals of this type are described in detail. It appears that the corpses were preserved in a trough of oil, most probably sesamum oil.[5] It is quite likely that the elaborate preparations for the funerals neces-

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1 NW III, 5, 47-48.
2. Dharma: PO II p. 124.
3 Ramdas: IHQ V p. 296.
4 NW IV, 23, 30.
5 NW II, 72, 47-50; Cf. BE VII, 75, 2.

sitated that a few days elapsed between the death and the funeral. One may wonder why this form of embalming dead bodies does not find more frequent reference in the literature of ancient India. The only reason conceivable for this is that the question of preserving the body occurred only in rare cases of powerful kings and princes.

§ 135. The funeral in the case of such a king or a prince was held on a grand scale. From the account of Daśaratha's death rites it is seen that the corpse was covered with expensive garments and that it was strewn with flowers, wreaths or garlands and incense.[1] The body was taken in a *śivikā* (a bier) which was preceded by a procession, wherein the royal insignia, namely the white parasol and the chowry were carried in front.[2] In the procession walked the priests such as Jābāli with the fire at which the king performed his daily *agnihotra* rite.[3] Besides, women with dishevelled hair and bards praising the good deeds of the dead king took part in the procession.[4] And on the way cart-loads of gems and gold were distributed among the poor.[5] This fact is important because it vouches for the antiquity of the custom in modern India where money and sometimes eatables are distributed among the poor while a funeral procession is in progress. The body was thus taken to the pyre built in an open place such as the bank of Sarayū as in the case of Daśaratha.[6] It is not clear from the Rāmāyaṇa data whether it was necessary to choose always a river bank. The part played by water in the funeral rites of ancient India might have made such a site more convenient. The pyre itself was made of dry logs of sandalwood and aloe and sometimes it was decked with carvings etc.[7]

§ 136. At the pyre the rites were performed by the priests and the immediate relatives of the deceased. The following account of Daśaratha's death rites is very instructive. The body was placed on the pyre. Then the Brahmans placed on him the heap of sacrificial utensils (*yajñapātracayam*). They assigned to their proper place according to the ritual the three fires at which the king sacrificed and they muttered meanwhile hymns. The Hotṛs wiped the sacrificial utensils with *Pavitras* (literally, purifiers i.e. Kuśa grass) and put them on to the pyre. The articles thus placed on the pyre comprised a ladle called *sruc* and other implements (*srukpātrāṇi*),[8] the wooden rings of the sacrificial post (*caṣālāni*), pestle and mortar and the kindling rods (*araṇi*). Then they cut an animal (*paśu*) quite likely a bull who had been purified with hymns

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1 NW II, 87, 15-16; 32. Cf. NW IV, 18, 5.
2 NW II, 87, 18-19; Cf. NW II, 87, 7-8; IV, 18, 13.
3 NW II, 87, 20.
4 NW II, 87, 27 & 23; Cf. NW IV, 18, 15.
5 NW II, 87, 21.
6 NW II, 87, 29.
7 NW II, 87, 30. Cf. NW IV, 18, 3.
8 Cf. Monier-Williams: *Skt-Eng. Dict.*. s. v.

(*mantrasaṃskārasaṃskṛtam*) and spread its flesh and guts[1] over the king's body. Having ploughed the site of the pyre they released a cow along with a calf. Then the body was sprinkled with oil, ghee and scents and Bharata with his relations kindled the pyre.[2] This description occurs only in the northern recensions. The omission in the BE is explicable as due to its unfamiliarity with these rites; South India did not in all probability have such death rites as described here while the Vedic literature clearly shows that they were prevalent in Northern regions of India.[3]

§ 137. After lighting the pyre the priests and the relations performed the ceremony of water (*jalakriyā*)[4] wherein Bharata bathed in the holy water of Sarayū and offered a handful of water in his father's name (*dadau pitaram uddiśya*).[5] Besides, the offered water from other holy rivers such as Vipāśa Śatadru, Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Sarasvatī and Candrabhāga.[6] This simple ceremony had been in ancient India an obligation on the part of every relation. The Rāmāyaṇa shows us that relations made use of any opportunity they got to perform the *jalakriyā* for the deceased person.[7] Besides this the usual *Śrāddha* ceremony was held. The Rāmāyaṇa mentions two Śrāddha ceremonies on the twelfth and the thirteenth days when in the name of the dead father Bharata gave away to Brahmans wealth, garments, cows, vehicles, slaves, houses and ornaments.[8] In the forest Rāma offered a modest *Śrāddha* wherein he placed a cake of *Iṅguda* mixed with *badara* on a cushion of *darbha* grass and proceeded to offer water.[9] The principle behind this rite is that the dead one is provided for, in this subtle manner, requisites for his journey in the next world. It must have been the concept at the time reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa because Jābāli stated sarcastically, "To one who is travelling Śrāddha should be given and then he need not take requisites for the journey."[10] The strong faith placed by the ancient Indians on this ceremony is evident from Rāma's improvised *Śrāddha* for Jaṭāyu; probably as no Brahmans were at hand or as he had no fitting gifts for them Rāma killed a stag and distributed its flesh among the wild animals.[11]

§ 138. The funeral rites of India had undergone many changes since the time of the Vedas. The rites represented in the epic are quite likely the ones limited to certain tribes or areas. Despite the changes in details the ritual in the Rāmāyaṇa agrees in principle with that

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1 The translation is tentative as the text which has *anvāstariṇaka is* some what obscure.
2 NW II, 87, 30-38.
3 Cf. Keith. HOS XXXII pp. 417-424.
4 NW II, 88, 25.
5 NW II, 89, 2-3.
6 NW II, 89, 6.
7 NW II, 94, 34; IV, 7, 39; VI, 92, 59; III 75, 40, IV, 50, 35-36.
8 NW II, 90, 1-3.
9 NW II, 116, 26 & 35.
10 NW II, 121, 14.
11 NW III, 75, 37-39.

described in the Vedas. And as such one may conclude that the Rāmāyaṇa reflects the funeral rites of a tribe or an area of Northern India with the peculiarities of the tribe or area, while the general scheme outlined in the Vedic literature is also adhered to.

CHAPTER IX

EDUCATION

A. Concept of Education and Methods of Study

§ 1. It has been already observed that the Indian social system was so organized as to ensure the best advantages for both the society and the individual (IV § 1). As such in the Āśrama system a special period of an individual's life was prescribed as the period of studentship. The importance attached to this stage, during which the student was expected to lead a celibate life under a code of rigorous discipline, is a clear indication that the education of the young was a special concern of the ancient Indian society. The ancient literary works such as the Vedas, the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads reveal that there was a well-established system of formal education not only by referring directly to institutions of learing such as the Vedic *Caraṇas* and the *Āśrama* and to students of various subjects and teachers but also in having preserved a continuous tradition.[1] The Buddhist Jātakas as well as the Canonical texts of the Jains too vouch for the importance given to education[2] while the special rules for the Brahmacāri stage in the Gṛhyasūtras and later in the Dharmaśāstras reflect that there had been in India a tradition of educating the youth not only academically but also morally.[3]

§ 2. The Rāmāyaṇa represents an age when education had spread to all castes and classes, for the people of Ayodhyā, who no doubt belonged to a number of social starta, were masters of all sciences.[4] There was none, according to the BE, who had not learnt the sciences (*nābahuśrutaḥ*)[5] for all were perfectly trained in knowledge (*sampūrṇā kṛtavidyānām*).[6] Besides, there were in Ayodhyā people who made a living on their intelligence and on their knowledge (*buddhyupajīvinaḥ* and *śāstropajīvinaḥ*).[7] The characters of the epic are all described as learned; Rāma was learned (*vidvān*) and was proficient in all sciences (*sarvaśāstraviśāradam*).[8] And even Rāvaṇa could not be called ignorant or uneducated (*avidvān* or *duḥśrutaḥ*)[9]. Learning was held in high esteem as is evident from the

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1 Max Muller: *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, Allahabad (1926) p. 98; pp. 193 ff. p. 230.
2 Mehta: PBI pp. 299 ff; Jain: LIJC pp. 169 ff.
3 Āpastambha Gṛhyasūtra; Manusmṛti II.
4 NW I, 5, 17.
5 BE I, 6, 15.
6 BE I, 6, 21.
7 NW II, 94, 16-17.
8 NW II, 81, 3; II, 46, 20; III, 6, 26.
9 NW III, 40, 13.

respect paid to the people who were wise (*prājña* and *paṇḍita*), erudite (*bahuśruta*) and well versed in all sciences.[1]

§ 3. The BE contains a number of interesting observations on the concept of education in ancient India. But unfortunately there is no agreement on it in the various recensions. Thus it is likely that they are interpolations reflecting the concept of a later period. It is interesting to note that eloquence was regarded as a sign of erudition. On hearing a speech of Hanumat Rāma told Lakṣmaṇa, "It is impossible to talk thus for one who is not learned in the Ṛg, the Yajur and the Sāma Vedas. Really he had heard (i.e. studied) the grammar in many ways; through constant practice not a single word was mispronounced. No defect is noticed in the mouth, the eyes, the forehead, the eye-brows or in any other place (while he spoke). His speech, which is brief, unequivocal (*asandigdham*), effortless and free of faltering (*avilambitam*) is (spoken) in a moderate voice. And he pronounces the sweet words which please the heart in (a tone) possessed of *finesse* and order, neither too fast nor too slow."[2] Hanumat is again said to be refined (*saṃskārasampannaḥ*) which according to the commentary was due to his proficiency in all sciences.[3] The BE associates eloquence with erudition when Rāma commended a statement of Sugrīva, "Without studying sciences (*śāstrāṇi*) and without associating with elders it is not possible to speak in this manner."[4] The Uttarakāṇḍa too supports this view; Mārtaṇḍa promised Hanumat that he would be taught the sciences so that he became eloquent (*tadāsya śāstraṃ dāsyāmi yena vāgmī bhaviṣyati*)[5].

§ 4. However, this concept of education as revealed by the *finesse* of one's speech is not found in the genuine sections of the epic; nor is eloquence considered to be the goal of education. On the other hand the Northern Recensions seem to imply that the aim of education was to obtain the best (*śreyas*) for Bharata is said to have desired the association of the learned because he aimed at the best (*śreyo'rthī*)[6]. From the same account of Bharata's education it appears that the perfection of knowledge (*jñāneṣu niṣṭhām*) and the feeling that all that had to be done had been completed (*kṛtakṛtya*)[7] were regarded as the culmination of learning. Further, the education was expected not only to make one learned in the Vedas, the Vedāṅgas and other subjects of study but also to make one ultimately virtuous—to be attached to asceticism and non-violence and always intent on the *Dharma*.[8] It is such a system of liberal education which could create the individual, whom the age reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa considered to be the ideal (IV §§ 32-36).

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1 NW V, 69, 4; BE VII, 94, 4; NW VI, 12, 7; II, 120, 13; VI, 4, 24; VI, 31, 2; II, 67, 15; IV, 46, 6.
2 BE IV, 3, 28-31.
3 BE VI, 17, 50
4 BE VI, 18, 8.
5 BE VII, 36, 14.
6 NW II, 2, 6.
7 NW II, 2, 15; 20 and 27.
8 NW II, 2, 18-19.

§ 5. The Northern Recensions, further, places knowledge on a high pedestal when Rāvaṇa is made to state that the desire to surmount all calamities through effort after transgressing the injunctions of the sciences (*śāstravādān atikramya*) is clearly a characteristic of the fool.[1] Yet the NW finds that mere erudition was dangerous; it says, "the bad one should be discarded even though he is adorned with knowledge (*durjanaḥ parihartavyo vidyālaṅkrto 'pi san*).[2]

§ 6. We may now turn to the provisions made by society for the dissemination of such an education as was considered the ideal. The hermitages seem to have been the regular centres of learning, wherein "far from the madding crowd" the ascetic-teachers imparted to their Brahmacāri students an education with a pronounced spiritual bias.[3] Yet the cities were also centres of learning; when Bharata came to Ayodhyā at the death of Daśaratha he was shocked to find that there was no noise of students studying implying thereby that such a noise was a common feature of the city.[4] It is not certain whether there were regular schools in ancient India. But there were, no doubt, centres of Vedic studies called the *Caraṇas* which may be regarded as schools in a general sense. But the Rāmāyaṇa does not make any specific references to them other than in one instance where a Taittirīya teacher is mentioned;[5] he is in all probability a teacher of the Taittirīya school of Vedic study.

§ 7. The epic does not offer any data as to whether the Āśramas were fully equipped educational institutions. But it is interesting to note that the abodes of various gods in the hermitage of Agastya—which we have explained as temples dedicated to those gods (VIII § 56)—are interpreted by R. K. Mookerji as departments of studies viz:—
"*Agnisthāna*, the place of fire-worship and prayers; *Brahmasthāna*, the Department of Veda; *Viṣṇusthāna*, the Department for teaching *Rājanīti Arthanīti* and *Vārttā; Mahendrasthāna*, military section; *Vivasvatasthāna*, Department of Astronomy; *Somasthāna*, Department of Botany; *Garuḍasthāna*, section dealing with transport and conveyances; *Kārtikeyasthāna*, section teaching military organization, how to form patrols, battalions and army."[6] It is doubtful whether he follows a tradition in explaining these. The commentary, Tilaka of Rāma, regarded these abodes only as the temples of the gods. Mookerji's interpretations are, no doubt, ingenious but it is far-fetched to read into a simple account such elaborate meanings when the sense that is obvious is sufficiently justifiable. Moreover, the subjects attributed to each god by Mookerji are not in keeping with the ancient Indian concepts. *Rājanīti* etc. would

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1 NW V, 88, 12 (not BE)
2 NW V, 90, 53 (not BE and GE).
3 NW I, 2, 1; I, 48, 5, III, 16, 1; VII 93, 21.
4 NW II, 78, 11.
5 NW II, 35, 17.
6 Mookerji: AIEM p. 333.

come within the sphere of *Bṛhaspati* rather than of Viṣṇu, while the military department cannot be associated with both *Mahendra* and *Kārtikeya* at the same time. Besides, it is incongruous to associate such an elaborate organization with the informal life in the hermitages.

§ 8. From the Rāmāyaṇa it appears that the Brahmans were usually the teachers[1] (IV § 6). But teachers hailed from other castes as well, for Bharata is stated to have received his education from the Brahmans who were well versed in writing grammar, polity and the Vedas, and also from the elders who were proficient in riding elephants and horses, driving chariots, in music and in various arts and crafts.[2] It is quite likely that these elders belonged to the Kṣatriya and the Vaiśya castes because the subjects taught by them fall within the purview of these castes. According to the GE even philosophy was learnt not solely from Brahmans but from others who were mature in knowledge, virtue, age and wisdom.[3]

§ 9. The epic has a few references to the relationship which existed between the teacher and the pupil. The teacher was regarded a *guru* because he imparted wisdom;[4] and according to the concept of *guru* (IV §§ 6 and 31) he was as important as the parents.[5] While the teacher was regarded as a father the pupil was considered to be his son.[6] The Bālakāṇḍa describes the association between the teacher and the pupil in a vivid simile wherein the former is compared to the root and the latter to the branches[7]—implying their interdependence for the existence of the tree!

§ 10. The teacher was held in high esteem. The thing that a learned man would consider least justifiable is the murder of a teacher by his pupil.[8] The pupils asked the teacher for his opinion in everything.[9] And among the reasons given by Hanumat for the attainment of erudition is the fact that he always won the affection of the teacher by not criticizing his faults (*gurudoṣāvicāraṇāt nityaṃ ca lalitasnehāt*).[10] Obedience to the teacher was an essential virtue and it was feared that in times of anarchy the pupil would not listen to the wholesome advice of the teacher.[11] Besides, the pupil attended on the teacher and worked for him. When Bharata and Vasiṣṭha visited the hermitage of Bharadvāja he ordered the pupils to bring water to wash the feet of the guests.[12] Viśvāmitra's pupils were sent by him on errands[13] while Vālmīki's pupil followed him to the river with a pitcher.[14]

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1 NW II, 1, 23; II, 11, 46-54; II, 2, 5.
2 NW II, 2, 2,-5.
3 GE I, 80, 14.
4 NW II, 24, 3, Cf. VI, 41, 26.
5 Cf. NW II, 124, 2; IV, 16, 71.
6 NW IV, 16, 71-72.
7 NW I, 54, 2-3.
8 NW II, 69, 28.
9 NW V, 88, 9.
10 NW IV, 56, 66.
11 NW II, 73, 10. Cf. also NW III, 80, 12 (guruśuśrūṣā).
12 NW II, 103, 7.
13 NW I, 55, 6 ff.
14 NW I, 2, 23.

§ 11. According to the Buddhist Jātakas the pupils could be divided into two categories, namely those who paid a fee and those who could not or did not pay but worked for the teacher instead. It is the latter group of pupils who did the menial work of the teacher's household.[1] But the epic does not represent such a distinction. Here even those who could have paid for their tution are also reported as executing the orders of the teachers and attending on them (*upāsya*); for instance Bharata not only presented the teacher with wealth but also honoured him and attended on him.[2] The distinction between the Buddhist and the epic students can be easily explained. The Buddhist sources knew of the liberal education as something secular; this did not have a spiritual background in the sense that the relationship between the teacher and the pupil was fundamentally identical with that between a dealer and his customer; the students paid for their tution either with money or with labour. But the epic represents a system of education viewed from the ideal of the Brahmacāri stage. According to this the period of studentship accompanied by the regular duties towards the teacher was a religious and caste obligation. And it s likely that the distinction of classes according to the material prosperity among the students was found to be not in keeping with the norm of the *Āśrama* system.

§ 12. The Brahmacāri period, as státed by Daśaratha, was a difficult stage in a boy's life.[3] Besides the rigours of study and attendance on the teacher, the student had to adhere to a strictly ascetic form of living. From a simile it appears that they were clad in antelope skin and wore the sacred thread.[4] Quite probably all the rules of discipline enumerated in the Dharmaśāstras for this stage applied to the pupils of the age reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa.[5] The ceremonial bathing which signified the completion of the period of studentship and entry to the next stage of the *Gṛhastha* is mentioned in the epic wherein an educated person is called *vidyāsnāta* or *vidyāvedavratasnāta*.[6]

§ 13. The Rāmāyaṇa mentions only a few of the practices associated with education in ancient India. An instance where the pupil was made to touch water i.e to wash himself (purificatory act?) before being taught is recorded in the Bālakāṇḍa.[7] Further, a tradition regarding the study of particular texts during particular seasons of the year seems to have existed as is evident from Rāma's description of the rainy season of which the month of Proṣṭapāda (August-September) was the time when the students of the Vedas studied the Sāma Veda.[8]

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1 Law: *Buddhistic Studies p.* 239.
2 NW II, 2, 8 & 13; GE I, 1, 80, 10-11. Cf. NW VI, 5, 7.
3 NW II, 37, 23.
4 NW IV, 21, 15-16.
5 Cf. Manusmṛti: II, 37 ff.
6 NW II, 92, 10; VI, 71, 59; V, 16, 17. Cf. Pāli *Nahātaka.*
7 NW I, 20, 20.
8 NW IV, 21, 10.

§ 14. That the normal method of learning had been oral is clear from the epithet *bahuśruta*, which literally means "much-heard" but signifies the same thing as the modern "well-read".[1] Memory was relied upon—true to the Indian tradition. And according to a late passage in the Bālakāṇḍa the sons of Rāma, Kuśa and Lava, had memorized the whole of the Rāmāyaṇa (*vācovidheyaṃ tat sarvaṃ kṛtvā kāvyam aninditam*).[2] The Vedas, too, were learned by rote and *svādhyāya*, which means learning by one's self or repeating to one's self[3] was the most important educational activity referred to in the epic.[4] This is once called also the practice in the Vedas (i.e. *vedābhyāsa*).[5] The Vedic studies were done according to a special tradition which is discussed in the Dharmaśāstras;[6] the Rāmāyaṇa mentions the utterance of "*Om*" at Vedic studies,[7] and also the rule which prohibits the questioning of the Vedas. In a simile Jaṭāyu tells Rāvaṇa that Sītā is as unassailable as the Vedic texts are by a fool with logical arguments (*hetubhir nyāyas-aṃyuktaiḥ mūḍho vedaśrutim iva*).[8] The context apparently implies the infallibility of the Vedic tradition, and the association of this statement with the injunction in the Manusmṛti that the Vedic lore should never be questioned is quite evident.[9]

§ 15. Diligence in studies was expected on the part of the pupil; as Daśaratha advised Bharata, not a moment should be spent in vain (*kṣaṇam apy āsitum putra vṛthā nārhasi sarvathā*).[10] As memory was entirely relied upon constant revision of lessons was a *sine qua non*, and a simile occurring a number of times refers to knowledge which had become faint (literally, thin) due to lack of practice and revision (Cf. *anabhyasanaśīlasya vidyeva tanutāṃ gatā*).[11]

§ 16. From the Rāmāyaṇa we learn also that debates and discussion-groups, of the type usually described in the Upaniṣads,[12] were resorted to as means of acquiring and disseminating knowledge. Sītā in speaking to Hanumat quoted two verses—ancient and pertaining to *Dharma*—which had been uttered by sages in an assembly of Brahmans (*Brahmasamāja*).[13] There is no doubt that the reference, here, is to a discussion group wherein the Brahmans and others discussed and debated on matters, religious and philosohpical. According to the BE such discussions were entered into in forests and public parks, fór as an evil effect of anarchy it is said that men proficient in sciences would not discuss in forests or parks (*narāḥ śāstraviśāradāḥ saṃvadantopatiṣ-*

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1 NW II, 3, 47.
2 BE I, 4, 12.
3 Cf. Monier-Williams: Skt-Eng. Dict. p. 1277.
4 NW II, 3, 46, II, 70, 33; BE I, 75, 7; V, 4, 13; VII, 3, 16.
5 BE VII, 17, 9.
6 Manusmṛti: II, 72 ff.
7 NW V, 81, 25.
8 NW III, 55, 22.
9 Cf. Manusmṛti : II, 10.
10 NW II, 1, 26.
11 NW V, 74, 18; V, 10, 40; BE V, 59, 31.
12 Cf. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad: IV.
13 NW VI, 94, 40.

ṭhante vaneṣūpavaneṣu vā.[1] Such intellectual pastimes were apparently fostered at sacrificial sessions. The Bālakāṇḍa refers to eloquent heroes (i.e. scholars) who in the Aśvamedha sacrifice of Daśaratha proferred many logical arguments (*hetuvādān*) with the desire to defeat one another (*parasparajigīṣavaḥ*)[2]; and the Uttarakāṇḍa in an exclusive verse of the NW mentions as attending the Aśvamedha sacrifice of Rāma scholars who answer when questioned.[3] It is no exaggeration to state that these debates and discussions were almost entirely responsible for the development of Indian religious and philosophical thought.

§ 17. Whether the educational institutions were patronized by the state is not clear from the evidence in the Rāmāyaṇa. The Brahmans were on the other hand presented with wealth by kings and princes on a number of occasions. In these cases the royalty do not seem to have patronized the Brahmans solely as educationists. Education during the age reflected by the epic was mainly a private concern. The Brahmans considered it a duty of their caste to impart an education to its members and others so as to maintain and preserve traditional learning. This explains why the learning imparted in ancient India had a Brahmanical bias and also why the educational institutions were mainly Brahmanical like the hermitages. The practical education which was not catered for in these institutions was obtained by the members of the artisan classes of the Vaiśya caste in all probability through a period of apprenticeship under master-artisans. The caste system, thus, might have exercised some influence on the type of education received by the youngsters. The principle behind the system of education in ancient India was, as today, the preparation of youngsters for life though the walk of life for each was determined by his caste. These limitations perhaps precluded the possibility of an average child receiving a liberal education.

B. Subjects of Study

§ 18. As the education imparted in ancient India had a Brahmanical bias the subject whose study was most emphasized was the Veda. We have already referred to *svādhyāya* which was a very important aspect of learning (IX § 14). The learned men appear to have been essentially specialists in the Vedas; they are called *vedavid*, *vedapāragū*, *śrutipāraga* and so forth.[4] Educational institutions were resounding with the noise of reciting the Vedas (*brahmaghoṣa*).[5] The Rāmāyaṇa

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1 BE II, 67, 26. 2 NW I, 10, 14.

3 NW VII, 93, 19 (not BE and GE). The reading *pṛṣṭhābhibhāṣiṇaḥ* is meaningless. It has to be *pṛṣṭābhibhāṣiṇaḥ = pṛṣṭābhidhayinaḥ*. Cf. Monier-Williams: Skt-Eng. Dict. p. 647.

4 NW II, 27, 17; II, 35, 4; 6; 10; 29; II, 86, 8, II, 94, 28; IV, 58, 26; V, 29, 14; VI, 108, 3; I, 30, 3; BE V, 34, 3; VI, 10, 8.

5 NW I, 5, 16; III, 4, 7.

does not tell us the number of Vedas which were generally studied; a verse in the BE belonging to the late *Kaccit* section refers in an enigmatic verse to *vidyās tisraḥ* which the commentary explains as the three Vedas.[1] And in different contexts the Ṛg Veda,[2] the Sāma Veda,[3] and the Yajur Veda (in the BE)[4] are mentioned. But the Atharva Veda is not referred to as a Veda although the hymns of the Atharvans (*mantrā ātharvaṇāḥ*) are known.[5] This context is very useful in assessing the position of the Atharva Veda during the period reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa. It mentions together the three Vedas along with the *Aṅgas* and the hymns of the Atharvans; the distinction between the Vedas and these hymns indicate firstly that the Atharva Veda was not reckoned as a Veda at the time and secondly that it was known only as a collection of hymns belonging to the Atharvans—a title which is reminiscent of the older name of this Samhitā, namely *Atharvāṅgirasaḥ*.[6] On this evidence we may consider that the Rāmāyaṇa, like the Buddhist texts,[7] knew only of three Vedas as such. *En passant* we may note also that a later verse in the Bālakāṇḍa of the BE attributes to Ṛṣyaśṛṅga the performance of a rite according to the *mantras*, expounded for the *Atharvaśiras*, which according to the Brāhmaṇas is the name of a brick used in building the sacrificial altar.[8]

§ 19. The study of the Vedas which apparently was undertaken by all the higher castes was not promoted merely because of their pertinence to sacrifice; Mookerji however thinks that "much of the intellectual life and culture of the community centred round sacrifice which had thus a very great educative influence."[9] This observation is true only as far as the development of the Vedic literature and its study by the Brahmans go. But the members of the other castes might have perhaps viewed them more from the literary rather than the liturgical angle. The Vedas no doubt formed the bulk of the literature available to a student at the age reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa. No finality, however, can be arrived at on this matter because nowhere is the purpose of Vedic studies by the non-Brahmans clearly stated and because the study of the Vedas by them shows no predilection for a purely literary approach. Thus Rāma is said in the BE to have been well versed in the Yajur Veda which is strictly a liturgical Saṃhitā.[10]

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1 BE II, 100, 68 and Commy.
2 NW VI, 98, 28.
3 NW VI, 98, 28; IV, 41, 28.
4 BE V, 35, 14. (the NW has *ṛjur* which may be a wrong reading for *Yajur*).
5 NW II, 28, 25. See Bloomfield: *The Atharva Veda* (Strassburg 1899) pp. 26 ff. discusses only references to Atharva Veda in the Mahābhārata etc.
6 Cf. Winternitz: ILW I, p. 120.
7 Bloomfield: *Ibid.* Cf. Dīgha Nikāya (P.T.S.) I p. 88 & p. 238. Sutta Nipāta (P.T.S.) p. 185.
8 BE I, 15, 2. Cf. Monier-Williams: *Skt. Eng, Dict.* sv.
9 Mookerji: AIEM p. 328.
10 BE V, 35, 14.

§ 20. Along with the Vedas were studied the Vedāṅgas[1] which are said to be six in number.[2] But they are not mentioned by name. A verse in the Bālakāṇḍa of the Northern recensions gives us some idea as regards the goal of such Vedic studies as discussed above in the case of a Brahman; the Brahmans were expected to be well versed in the Vedas, and the Vedāṅgas, to know the Sūtras and their commentaries (*sūtra-bhāṣya*) and to be proficient in sacrificial rites (*yajñakarma*).[3]

§ 21. Besides, religious scriptures (*āgama*) are referred to,[4] but it is not certain what they actually mean. As a subject mastered by the ministers of Lomapāda is cited the Vedānta,[5] which as stated earlier (VIII § 7) may refer either to the Upaniṣads or to the Vedānta system. Further, along with the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas are mentioned the *Itihāsa*[6] and religious stories as studied by Rāma's sons and Bharata.[7] It is also interesting to note that the Rāmāyaṇa in different recensions not only refers to Manu[8] as an authority but also quotes with a few changes verses VII, 316 and 318 of the Manusmṛti.[9]

§ 22. The literary studies at the time reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa included also writing (*lekhya*).[10] The art of writing was well known and it was utilized for private communications and records. It is said that Vasiṣṭha and Vāmadeva wrote out a list of requisites for Rāma's coronation (*lekhayān cakratur dravyam*).[11] But no reference is made to written books in the epic. There is in Ayodhyākāṇḍa a reference to *Granthas*[12] which may not necessarily mean books in manuscript form, for *Grantha* would signify even a work handed down traditionally. In keeping with the ancient Indian system of education most of the literary works had their existence in the memory of the teachers and pupils. We are confronted by the usual problem to explain why books were not written down in ancient times when the art of writing was prevalent and used for everyday business.

§ 23. The evidence from the Buddhist books also represents identical conditions.[13] Kennedy's arguments which Rhys Davids has accepted seem to account for the fact that the literature was left unwritten for some time. To summarize the relevant arguments: firstly, the Indians had perfected the art of handing down an extensive literature like the Vedic literature orally before writing was introduced; secondly, the material used for writing was not fit for permanent records and it was at a later time that ola leaves were perfected; finally, the priestly prejudice

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1 NW II, 2, 8 & 10; II, 70, 42; II, 16, 23; V, 29, 14, VI, 110, 1; BE VII, 1, 8.
2 NW I, 5, 19; V, 13, 2; I, 10, 16.
3 NW I, 9, 42 (not BE).
4 NW II, 3, 28; II, 28, 36,
5 NW I, 8, 15.
6 NW I, 4, 49 (not BE).
7 NW II, 2, 18.
8 NW II, 25, 11 (not BE).
9 BE IV, 18, 30; 32, & 31.
10 NW II, 2, 2.
11 NW II, 5, 6.
12 NW II, 121, 15.
13 Rhys Davids; Buddhist India; pp. 66-70.

against the learning of sacred texts by certain classes prevented them being written down.[1] The first reason may be open to controversy because of the theory that the art of writing in India had an indigenous origin.[2] The others may account for the absence of written books at the time depicted by the Rāmāyaṇa as well.

§ 24. In the Uttarakāṇḍa, again, Hanumat is said to study a *grantha* in grammar[3]; but the context does not make it clear whether it was a written book. However, it may be regarded as a manuscript in view of the fact that the literature referred to therein belongs to a late period. The methods adopted by writers of books to publish them were quite simple as are shown from the account of the publishing of the Rāmāyaṇa itself. Vālmīki after the composition thought, "Who will publish this in the world?" and he decided on the two sons of Rāma who were made to sing it in public.[4] This procedure in all probability applied to popular works. But the more serious works were probably handed down orally to the pupils who in turn taught them to their pupils.

§ 25. Further details on literary studies are given in the latest parts of the epic. *Śikṣā* and *Chandas* (phonetics and metrics) which are referred to here also[5] come within the six Vedāṅgas which have been already discussed (IX § 20). Besides, reference is made to the *Rasa* theory. The Rāmāyaṇa is called a poem based on emotion (*bhāvānugaṃ kāvyam*)[6] and it is said to contain the *Kāvyarasas* (not *Nāṭyarasas*) such as *Śṛṅgāra*, *vīra*, *bībhatsa*, *raudra*, *hāsya*, *bhayānaka*, *karuṇa*, *adbhuta* and *śānta*.[7] The southern recension, however, includes a different reading. Only six are mentioned—omitting *bībhatsa*, *adbhuta* and *śānta*—although it leaves room for more with the expression *vīrādi* (*vīra et cetera*).[8] The mention of *śānta* as the ninth *Rasa* as opposed to the eight Rasas given in the Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharata[9] and the term *kāvyarasa* in contrast to *nāṭyarasa* of Bharata may be regarded as reasons in favour of dating this verse in the period subsequent to the Nātyaśāstra; that is, this verse may represent the time when the Rasa theory which according to the general consensus of opinion began as a section of dramaturgy had been transferred to the sphere of poetry and when a new Rasa was added to the traditional eight. But no exact date can be given for either of these events. Yet it may be remembered that the Rasa theory, either consciously or otherwise had been applied to poetry in the early sections of the Rāmāyaṇa itself.

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1 Rhys Davids: *loc.cit.*, pp. 73-74.
2 See Marshall: Mohenjo-Daro & The Indus Civilization II pp. 423 ff.
3 BE VII, 36, 44.
4 NW I, 4, 36 ff.
5 BE I, 2, 18; GE I, 13, 18; NW IV, 46, 8; BE VII, 94, 8-9.
6 NW I, 4, 54.
7 NW I, 4, 43-44.
8 BE I, 4, 9.
9 Nāṭyaśāstra: VI, 16 ff.

§ 26. Similarly was a number of *Alaṅkāras* used in the epic although it nowhere mentions any views of the Alaṅkāra school. The Uttarakāṇḍa, further, gives us a glimpse of methods adopted in reviewing a new work. When the Rāmāyaṇa was to be sung by Kuśa and Lava Rāma sent for *Paurāṇikas* (knowers of old legends), grammarians, specialists in vocal characteristics, musicians, interpreters of sacred texts (*naigama*), metricians, logicians, Vedic scholars, knowers of beauty (*or* painters *citrajña*), masters of singing and dancing, artistes who could distinguish between arts (*kalā—mātraviśeṣajña*?), astronomers and specialists in sacrifice.[1] The fact that specialists in various arts and sciences which find reference in the poem were invited to the king's audience indicates that the poem was to be examined and criticized by them. As such a poem appears to have been criticized not only from the aesthetic point of view but also with reference to the accuracy of the statements. The list of specialists gives us also the indication that a critic was expected to be well versed in the various aspects of learning represented therein. With such a wide range of qualifications expected from a critic it is not surprising if Rāma wished to have so many to listen, appreciate and quite likely criticize the poem.

§ 27. The epic refers also to linguistic studies although no direct reference is made to any particular language as a subject of study. The curriculum included grammatical studies as they came within the Vedāṅga, *Vyākaraṇa*. The later section of the epic discloses great developments of the subject. Besides mentioning certain grammatical categories like *samāsa* and *sandhi* in the *Bālakāṇḍa*,[2] the Uttarakāṇḍa states that Hanumat learnt his grammar along with the sūtras, the comments (*Vṛtti*, probably signifying the Vārtikās of Kātyāyana), meanings or commentaries (*arthapada*) and summaries (*saṅgraha*).[3] Such a collection of grammatical works no doubt belongs to the age subsequent to Patañjali (circa. 150 A.D.)

§ 28. Besides literary and linguistic studies, subjects of study during the period reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa included the traditional law (*dharmaśāstra*)[4], economics (*arthaśāstra*)[5] and polity (*nītiśāstra*).[6] Polity is also referred to as *Nayaśāstra*[7] and two works of this subject i.e. *Auśanasaṃ Mantraṃ*[8] and *Bhārgavanītisaṃhitā*[9] are also mentioned. When kings and ministers are said to be well versed in *Mantra*[10] the reference is quite likely to the science of polity, an aspect of which

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1 BE VII, 94, 5-9.
2 BE I, 2, 43.
3 VII, 36, 44-45.
4 NW II, 118, 14; V, 75, 7.
5 NW II, 114, 9; VI, 41, 17; II, 2, 28.
6 NW II, 111, 21; VI, 106, 19; BE I, 7, 19; NW II, 2, 28.
7 NW VI, 8, 13; V, 91, 23.
8 NW VI, 82, 42 (not BE & GE).
9 BE VII, 93, 18.
10 NW II, 95, 8; V, 94, 13,

seems to be represented by *Rājaśāstra*.[1] These subjects appear to have been studied mainly by the Kṣatriyas because of their relevance to the task of ruling.

§ 29. For the same practical purpose the Kṣatriya boys were given a thorough training in archery which was called *dhanurveda*,[2] use of weapons,[3] riding and managing horses and elephants,[4] and in other crafts (*śilpa*).[5] They were taught also jumping and swimming (*plavana*)[6] in addition to painting and music.[7] We have already observed that they were expected to learn philosophy too (VIII § 3). Theirs was a wide curriculum of studies and if their training differed from that received by Brahman boys it was only with reference to the emphasis laid on the practical aspect; that is, the Kṣatriyas were given a practical training in warfare and statesmanship while the Brahmans had it in the art of sacrifice. It is worthwhile noting that these courses of studies did not include such subjects like arithmetic and geography. In fact a knowledge of geography is represented, of course in one of the interpolated cantos, as a rare achievement.[8] The subjects studied by youngsters during the period represented by the Rāmāyaṇa stand in contrast to those studied by Nārada in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad; besides the usual literary studies Nārada is said to have learnt rituals, arithmetic, physics, chronology, logic, polity, technology (?), *Brahmavidyā*, the science of spirits, archery, astronomy, the science of antidotes and the fine arts.[9] This may represent a different system of education. But it is not possible to account for them especially because we are not justified in considering that what is not mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa was not current in ancient India; it would be a mere *argumentum ex silentio*.

§ 30. We may here deal with two subjects on which the Rāmāyaṇa offers us such data as would help us in tracing their history, namely, Astronomy and Medicine. The astrological theories recorded in the epic (VII §§ 36 ff.) presuppose a fairly well-established science of Astronomy, for it cannot be denied that Astrology is an applied science which had evolved from Astronomical observations.

§ 31. Astronomy is no doubt one of the oldest sciences to be perfected by man. The ancient civilizations of the world not only attest to its existence but also depict it as a potent influence on the religious beliefs of the ancient peoples. In India the Ṛgveda testifies to the familiarity of the Aryans with this subject. The Rāmāyaṇa as such ought to represent a stage when Astronomy in India was widely prevalent

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1 NW V, 56, 127; V, 85, 8; V, 29, 13 (*rājavidyā*); II, 21, 50 (*kśatravidyā*).
2 NW V, 29, 14; I, 50, 17-18 BE I, 18, 37; NW II, 2, 28.
3 NW II, 1, 24.
4 NW II, 2, 3; II, 2, 28; II, 1, 24.
5 NW II, 1, 25; II, 2, 4.
6 NW II, 2, 29.
7 NW II, 2, 29; II, 1, 25.
8 NW IV, 37, 14.
9 Chāndogya Upaniṣad: VII,1, 2 & 4.

and understood. This is very clear from the fact that the author (or authors) of the epic has resorted to this science as a source of vivid similes. And it is from these similes that we learn about the Astronomical theories current in the age reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa.

§ 32. The commonest allusion is to the eclipse of the sun and the moon which has been conceived as due to the malignant influence of the planet Rāhu (i.e. *rāhugrahapīḍayā*)[1]. Similarly the fall of meteors finds reference in similes as well as in accounts of omens and portents (VII §§ 26 ff).[2] The association of the moon with the asterisms is also an oft-alluded theme. Inseparables like Rāma and Sītā are usually compared to the moon and *Rohiṇī*,[3] the principal star (i.e. Aldebaran) of the constellation of that name. Sugrīva standing between his two wives is likened to the moon between the two stars of the asterism, *Viśākha*.[4] Likewise Atikāya's face between his earrings is said to resemble the moon between the two stars of *Punarvasu*,[5] while Rāma with Lakṣmaṇa shone like the moon with Citrā.[6] Besides, Sītā and Tārā are compared to *Rohiṇī* and *Arundhatī*.[7]

§ 33. The approach of planets towards the asterisms forms the theme of a number of similes depicting the malignant influence of a stronger person on a weaker. Rāvaṇa approached Sītā like Saturn approaching Citrā[8] or like a planet approaching Rohiṇī (*grahaḥ khe rohiṇīm iva*).[9] Sītā in Aśokavana was like Rohiṇī which was harassed by the planet Mars or Aṅgāraka (*graheṇāṅgārakeneva pīḍitām divi rohiṇīm*),[10] and like *Rohiṇī* who was covered with smoke through contact with the "planet" *Dhūmaketu* (i.e. Dragon's Tail; the context precludes the common meaning of comet).[11] There is also an allusion to *Rohiṇī* being approached by *Budha*[12] while the Uttarakāṇḍa in a simile refers to a star which being contacted by a planet (*grahagrastām*) is defiled and devoid of lustre.[13]

§ 34. Further, the Rāmāyaṇa mentions the conflicts of planets (*grahayuddha*) in describing the battle between Vālin and Sugrīva. They are said to have fought like *Budha* and *Śukra*[14] and like *Budha* and Aṅgāraka.[15] A reference to amiable contact is found in the statement that Bharata and Sumantra approached Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa like *Śukra* and *Bṛhaspati* approaching the sun and the moon.[16] Besides these

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1 NW II, 36, 16; II, 43, 39; III, 32, 25; III, 39, 62; VI, 83, 26; VI, 83, 29; BE VII, 35, 31.
2 NW III, 23, 17; III, 58, 26.
3 NW II, 17, 38; III, 1, 53; III, 22, 2; V, 11, 47; V, 27, 5; VI, 107, 48, III, I, 71.
4 NW IV, 26, 37.
5 NW VI, 52, 28.
6 BE III, 17, 4.
7 NW VI, 92, 16. (not GE); IV, 16, 13, (not BE).
8 NW III, 51, 8.
9 NW VI, 71, 39; VI, 107, 58.
10 NW V, 10, 24.
11 NW V, 14, 9.
12 NW VI, 83, 27.
13 BE VII, 81, 2.
14 NW IV, 12, 24.
15 NW IV, 8, 78.
16 NW II, 113, 38.

data the Rāmāyaṇa mentions two sons of Saturn (*śanaiścarasutau*)[1] and a number of stars such as the *Maharṣis* (= *Saptarṣi*) which circumambulated the Pole Star (*Dhruva*).[2] The other references in the epic were discussed in dealing with the lunar mansions in connection with Astrology (VII §§ 36 ff).

§ 35. The data thus offered by the Rāmāyaṇa are of special significance to the students of Astronomy. As Sen Gupta has done, it is possible not only to check whether the similes are astronomically accurate but also to calculate the probable date of the statements; for instance the simile that Atikāya's face was like the moon between the two stars of the asterism *Punarvasu*, i.e. Castor and Pollux, has been declared only a hypothetical case which is astronomically improbable. Similarly he calculates the date of the Rāmāyaṇa as circa 438 A.D., though this date is controversial (I § 81).[3]

§ 36. The dating of the astronomical data of the Rāmāyaṇa is a difficult problem. Sen Gupta's researches has led him to the following conclusion, "as to his astronomy we may conclude that he knew the seven planets by name and appearance, knew also the Nakṣatras or lunar mansions by their configurations in the sky. As to the planets, the references further tend to show that our poet knew some rules for the calculation of longitudes of planets, however rough they might have been. The earliest date that can be ascribed to this state of astronomical knowledge in India must be that of the Vasiṣṭha Siddhānta as summarised by Varāhamihira in his *Pañca Siddhāntika*."[4] He further suggests that the astronomical views of the Rāmāyaṇa were derived from Parāśara from which, according to him, its geography also is taken.[5] Sen Gupta no doubt errs on this point. While the geographical cantos which evince the influence of Parāśara stand out quite vividly as interpolations (II § 53), the astronomical data are sufficiently well incorporated in the epic and show no significant divergences in the three recensions, thus proving that they formed an integral part of the epic from the earliest stages of its development. Besides, the data in the Rāmāyaṇa does not reflect the precision of the writings of the classical astronomers such as Parāśara and Varāhamihira. There is little doubt that the astronomy of the Rāmāyaṇa belongs to a period anterior to that of these writers.

§ 37. We may examine here the observation of Weber that the Indian astronomers acquired their knowledge of the planets at a comparatively late period as the earliest references to them occur in the

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1 NW V, 88, 2.
2 NW V, 71, 45. Cf. BE I, 14, 27.
3 Sen Gupta: JDL (Calcutta) XIX pp. 15; 17.
4 Sen Gupta: *loc. cit.* p. 11.
5 Sen Gupta: *ibid.*

Atharvapariśiṣṭa and in Yājñavalkya. This he explains as due to Greek influences.[1] This, however, is less probable because the Indian theory of Astronomy seems to have associated the planets with lunar mansions as opposed to the Greek practice of relating them to the solar *Rāśis* or the houses of the Zodiac. If the Rāmāyaṇa records any data which are akin to the Greek system they come in the southern recension in the obvious interpolated verses outlining the horoscopes of Rāma and his brothers (VII § 40). Even these may not be borrowed from the Greeks because as Lassen argues there is the greater possibility of borrowing them from the Chaldean astronomers.[2] In view of the fact that the Chaldeans had perfected a theory of Astronomy based on the Zodiac and that the ancient Indians—as proved by the archaeological evidences revealing the similarity and the association of Chaldean civilization with that of Indus Valley—had direct connections with the Chaldeans, we may surmise that India was influenced by the Chaldeans in the sphere of Astronomy rather than by the Greeks. In the light of these observations it is possible to conclude that the astronomical data of the Rāmāyaṇa go back to a pre-Greek period wherein the most probable foreign influence came from the Chaldeans, that a system of astrology based on the lunar system had been widely practised and that the conception of the solar system with Zodiacal signs had come into vogue during the period represented by the latest sections of the epic.

§ 38. Concerning the science of Medicine the references are fewer. Physicians and surgeons who were clever and who were to be respected are mentioned.[3] It appears from the Rāmāyaṇa that they had specialized in various aspects of medical practice; there were specialists in administering antidotes (*viṣavaidyāḥ*), in paediatrics (*bālānāṃ cikitsakāḥ*), in removing thorns and spikes (*śalākāśalyahartāraḥ*)[4] and in surgery (*śastrakarmakṛto vaidyāḥ*).[5] A case of surgery is referred to in a simile wherein Sītā feared that she would be cut by the Rākṣasas like a foetus in the womb is cut by a surgeon (*śalyahartā;* BE has *śalyakṛntah*, commented upon as *āmbasthavaidyaḥ*).[6] This may refer to an application of surgical methods in removing a dead body from the womb; the simile does not permit us to regard it as a case of Caesarean operation. A legend in the Bālakāṇḍa mentions another case of midwifery. The sixty thousand sons of Sagara, who were born out of a gourd which his wife delivered, were brought up in pots of ghee (*ghṛtapūrṇeṣu kumbheṣu*).[7] It is, however, not clear from this rather mythical account whether

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1 Weber: IA Ip. 180.
2 Lassen: IA III p. 103. Cf. also Macdonell and Keith: Vedic Index I, s.v. *nakṣatra*.
3 NW II, 94, 14; II, 13, 10; II, 114, 41; BE II, 100, 13.
4 NW II, 94, 22-23.
5 NW II, 114, 37.
6 NW V, 22, 6; BE V, 28, 6 & Commy.
7 NW I, 35, 18.

the under-developed babies were given such an artificial womb till they became sufficiently strong!

§ 39. The Rāmāyaṇa reveals the existence of a well-established medical lore in ancient India. Associated with the churning of the Milky Ocean is the rise of Dhanvantari who has been traditionally regarded the greatest of physicians.[1] Another event related to the churning of the ocean explains the origin of medicinal herbs. The two peaks of Mahodaya—Droṇa and Candra—became replete with such herbs because some *Amṛta* was dropped there.[2] A popular belief as regards herbs appears to suggest that they were mostly found on hills and in fact the Himālayas were considered to be rich in medicinal herbs.[3] This observation might have been due to the fact that the lowlands were generally cleared for cultivation while the hills where the natural forests were allowed to remain were the sources of herbs. The NW refers to an instance of certain popular beliefs associated with medicine; a belief similar to those current in India and Ceylon with respect to the time and the manner of preparing the medicine appears to be reflected in Suṣeṇa's injunction that the herbs had to be brought in the night itself because they lost their power at sunrise.[4] Lastly we may note a statement in the Northern recensions to the effect that herbs of the peaks of Mahodaya were guarded by Gandharva kings.[5] This view in all probability has developed out of the belief that Soma was guarded by them.

§ 40. The epic refers to herbs which had special healing properties. There were herbs which removed spikes and arrows (*viśalyakaraṇīm*), which revived (saṃjīvanīṃ), which fixed fractured bones (*sandhinīm?*) and which brought back the complexion (*savarṇakaraṇīm*).[6] Herbs which bring serpents under control also find mention.[7] The Rāmāyaṇa does not state clearly how these herbs were administered. There are, however, two references to crushing the herbs on a stone and administering them as nasal drops (*nasyam*).[8] These show us that even the scanty data in the Rāmāyaṇa speak of a somewhat developed system of medicine in ancient India. The manner in which the science of medicine—*Āyurveda*, which, however, is mentioned once only in the BE[9] — was imparted to pupils is not described in the epic. It is probable that like other practical arts and crafts a period of apprenticeship was the rule.

§ 41. Whether any scientific studies were undertaken cannot be ascertained from the data in the epic. A few zoological observations are however included, but they appear to be more mythical than scientific.

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1 NW II, 53, 29.
2 NW VI, 81, 34-35; 53; GE VI, 26, 6.
3 NW IV, 30, 32 & 36.
4 NW VI, 81, 40 (not BE & GE).
5 NW VI, 81, 36 (not BE).
6 NW VI, 81, 30-32.
7 NW III, 35, 9.
8 NW VI, 81, 176; VI, 70, 18.
9 BE I, 45, 31.

Thus the lion is said to eat no prey if it is even touched by another[1]; the swan is believed to be capable of straining milk from water[2] while snakes are stated to thrive on air alone.[3] These reveal that no scientific accounts of the behaviour of these animals were available to the author or authors, who on the other hand were familiar with numerous popular beliefs about them. A more reliable zoological observation is contained in Vālin's statement that hares, porcupines, iguanas, *sedhā* (also a porcupine) and tortoises had five nails or claws.[4]

§ 42. The Rāmāyaṇa reflects a high standard of education in ancient India although the subjects studied by the students were only partially developed. Other than the literary studies, with the Veda as the most significant field, and the sciences of astronomy and medicine, no subject appears to have been perfected by means of research. Yet whatever little was known on each subject the students were made to acquire. The educational system in ancient India thus is important because it made every student conversant with practically all the branches of study available at the time while the practical aspect of education was not altogether neglected. But one cannot be certain whether all children of "the school-going age" (as we would say) received a primary education. The epic gives us no definite clue on this problem. But from the fact that the Brahman and the Kṣatriya children alone are mentioned as being given a liberal education it may be surmised that education was in ancient India a monopoly of the higher castes.

C. Didacticism and Legends

§ 43. The intellectual achievements of a people cannot be gauged merely by their beliefs, philosophy, religion and subjects of formal study, for the wisdom of the nation remains crystalised in their proverbs and gnomic verses while their sense of history and their creative imagination are reflected in their legends. A complete assessment of their achievements, therefore, is impossible unless their proverbs, didactic sayings and legends are also considered.

§ 44. The Rāmāyaṇa refers to a few proverbs current in ancient India with the terms, *śruti*, *laukikī* and *lokapravāda*. whose authorship is attributed to ascetics and learned men.[5] They deal with a number of aspects of life and reflect in all the peculiar attitude of the Indian to life. The philosophy and the religious thought generally emphasize that life was replete with suffering. The popular beliefs represented the indifference of the ancient Indian to the worries of life in accepting all

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1 NW II, 66, 26.
2 NW III, 24, 5.
3 NW I, 50, 13 (not BE & GE).
4 NW IV, 13, 17.
5 NW II, 120, 11; II, 117, 16; VI, 107, 2; V, 20, 10.

that came his way as being caused by his unaccountable fate (VII § 19). But the proverbs indicate that he was out and out an optimist who would welcome even pain as a harbinger of happiness. Put in the mouth of Hanumat is the proverb "Those who have not seen suffering shall not attain the end of suffering" (*adṛṣṭaduḥkhā duḥkhasyana hy antam adhigacchanti*).[1] Even death was considered to come to an individual only at the proper time.[2] And his optimism is clear from the adage that happiness comes to a living man even after a hundred years (*eti jīvantam ānando naraṃ varṣaśatād api*).[3] Again the popular outlook that pleasure in life amidst all its hardships should not be foregone is amply reflected in a saying in the BE, "The man who having gone to a forest infested with wild animals does not drink honey which he finds is a fool."[4] Another proverb suggests that beings are deluded when their destruction is near.[5] To depict the uniqueness of a brother Rāma quotes a proverb: "There is a proverb that Parjanya rains crops; yet this saying too must be thought of that it does not rain a brother (*mātṛjam*).[6] A proverb with a philosophical tinge is cited by Kausalyā: "Whatever food a man eats, that would be the maintenance of his deities (i.e. sense powers)": *yadannaḥ puruṣo hi syāt tadannās tasya devatāḥ.* The use of the term "devatāḥ" in this particular sense is important because of the close resemblance to the Upaniṣadic terminology.[7] Lastly, we observe a pithy saying which Sītā alludes to in imputing that the Rākṣasas who are capable of changing their forms should recognize Hanumat; it states, "A serpent alone knows the state of a serpent."[8]

§ 45. The Rāmāyaṇa reveals that there existed in ancient India a vast literature of gnomic verses, which was drawn upon by the epics as well as by the non-orthodox sects, Buddhism and Jainism. This is what Winternitz calls "*the Ascetic poetry*".[9] The gnomic verses which upheld moral and religious values have been discussed under the caption of morality (VIII §§ 80 ff). Here we deal with those which represent worldly wisdom and which contain observations on human life. They are mainly didactic in purpose.

§ 46. The most important didactic section of the Rāmāyaṇa is a speech of seventeen verses according to the Northern recensions and eighteen verses in the southern.[10] Ramaswami Sastri notes that these eighteen verses (according to the BE) "are described as the *Gītā* (which consists of 18 chapters) within the Rāmāyaṇa."[11] It deals with the subject of death expounded by Rāma in subtle details so as to allay the

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1 NW V, 24, 7.
2 NW V, 20, 10; V, 22, 3.
3 NW VI, 107, 2; BE V, 34, 6.
4 BE VI, 13, 2.
5 NW II, 118, 7.
6 NW VI, 25, 8 (not BE).
7 NW II, 117, 16 (not GE) Cf. Wijesekera: UCR Vol. II, Nos. 1 & 2, pp. 14 ff.
8 NW V, 39, 10.
9 Winternitz: ILW I p. 474.
10 NW II, 119, 1-17; BE II, 105, 14-31.
11 Ramaswami Sastri: SR p.151.

sorrow of his brothers and the people at the death of Daśaratha. It runs as follows: "Being told thus by Bharata, Rāma who was established in the path of *Dharma* spoke these courageous words in the midst of the gathering: This man is helpless and he is unable to act according to his will. While he wanders here and there death drags him away. All 'aggregates' end with decay and elevation ends with fall. Association ends with separation and death indeed is the limit for life. Just as there is no fear for a well-ripe fruit other than from falling, a man who is born has no fear other than from death. Just as a firm and huge house being shattered sinks, so do men overcome by the noose of death sink low. With death himself one walks; with death does one stand. Having gone a long distance with death does one stop. Days and nights turn on and drag swiftly here the life-span of all beings, as the sun's rays (drag away) the water in summer. Grieve for yourselves; why should you grieve for others? See; your life-span decreases as you stand and move. Wrinkles[1] have come upon the limbs; the hair has turned grey; and the man is shattered with old age. Abandoning what may one be happy here? While the sun rises here and it sets men do not comprehend the destruction of their lives (*or* according to the BE: Men rejoice when the sun rises; they rejoice as the day is gone. But men do not realise the destruction of their lives). Seeing great new gains one rejoices (*or* according to the BE: seeing the beginning of a new season one rejoices) as if it has come anew. By the change of seasons are the lives of beings destroyed. Just as a log meets another in the great ocean and part after being together for a split moment so do wives, sons, friends and riches meet and depart; their decay is certain. No being shall adopt a different course. Therefore here is no capacity (to change) on the part of those who grieve for the dead. As one on the way would tell a companion, "I shall come behind you", thus does one tread the natural and eternal path trodden by the ancestors, fathers and grandfathers. How can one grieve for him who has no chance of departing from it? When Age floats away like a rushing current, the Self should be yoked to the *Dharma* by the wise who know the *Dharma*."

§ 47. This passage depicts the attitude of the ancient Indian thinkers to life and the similarity of these views to those expressed in Buddhist and Jain works is striking. This differs from the picture drawn by the proverbs which represent a more popular attitude without the intervention of philosophical speculation. In the Uṭtara Kāṇḍa there is another passage which conveys similar sentiments as the above. This attributed to Nāroda seeks to emphasize the futility of this world. He

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1 The reading in BE *valayaḥ* is preferred to NW *pralayaḥ*.

calls this world a place full of old age and hundreds of diseases[1] and which is being destroyed, struck by fate and deluded with sorrow and dejection due to hunger, thirst and decay.[2] He further says, "At one place the happy people resort to music and dance while others being tormented lament, shedding showers of tears. This cursed man being deluded by the affection of parents and sons and by the joys of wives and relations does not realise his own affliction."[3]

§ 48. The epic includes also a number of gnomic verses on subjects of everyday interest. Loosely associated with action are the following: "Rāvaṇa distinguishes among three types of men according to their approach to action, to wit, a great man, an average man and a lowly man. He who consults ministers, friends and relations and strives to perform some work even when fate is against is a great man, while he who decides by himself and acts by himself is an average individual and he who does not decide between the advantages and the disadvantages, who is solely intent on fate and who is indifferent to action saying, 'I will do it' is a lowly man."[4] So did Sītā also state that the man who does not begin anything and who is intent on fate and on fleeing (from work) becomes a pauper soon.[5] Further, actions which are improper to the place and time defile the man who acts perversely like the oblations that are not offered.[6] In spite of the recommendation of Rāvaṇa the actions performed by an individual without informing others is reckoned to be commendable for Lakṣmaṇa told Indrajit, "A wise man is he who acts without speaking."[7] It is likely that this does not mean acting on one's own conviction so much as it indicates the commendation of action in preference to speaking. The similar concept seems to be represented in Rāvaṇa's statement, "Just as the paths of the sun and the moon, of the planets and the stars are not seen in the sky so is the conduct of great men (invisible to the rest)."[8]

§ 49. Another subject for gnomic verses was calamity and its reactions. "He who is deluded at times of calamity", Lakṣmaṇa said to Rāma, "perishes due to few causes. (*hetunālpena*)"[9] He had stated, further, that "a wise man does not sink in sorrow on coming unto a difficult period; but the fool having approached a calamity sinks like a stone in water."[10] Further, he who is overwhelmed with dejection when a disaster has occurred is said to fail in attaining his purpose being devoid of majesty.[11] The BE and the GE emphasize that he who is

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1 BE VII, 20, 9.
2 BE VII, 20, 11.
3 BE VII, 20, 13-14. Cf. also IV, 15, 56-59 (not GE).
4 NW V, 77, 8-11.
5 NW V, 32, 21.
6 NW VI, 41, 6.
7 NW VI, 66, 26.
8 NW V, 81, 10 (not BE).
9 NW III, 69, 59.
10 NW III, 69, 56.
11 NW IV 56, 14. Cf. GE IV, 6, 10.

overcome with sorrow attains no happiness.[1] The ideal of being equally disposed to both pleasure and sorrow is dealt in a verse which says, "A wise man bestowed with intellect does not discriminate between the good and the bad; they (i.e. wise men) are neither sorry nor happy on meeting the good or the bad."[2] But indifference (*nirveda*) finds no recommendation in the epic which on the other hand says "The lack of indifference (*anirveda*) is the root of glory; it is the highest bliss and it always urges all benefits."[3]

§ 50. Lastly we find a set of gnomic verses which deal with human relations. Rāma is attributed with the statement, "The qualities of praise, forbearance, tenderness and sweet speech are always the result of weakness (*asāmārthyaphala*) in the case of those without virtues. Through peace there cannot be glory; through peace there cannot be fame. Victory, O Lakṣmaṇa, in this world (is) to be attained in the battle-field. The world adores the man who is constantly praising himself, who is an aggressor though speaking blandly and who is ready with arms on all sides."[4] It is Vibhīṣaṇa who is reported to have said, "O king, many are the people who talk always sweetly. But the speaker as well as the listener of unpleasant but wholesome (*pathyasya*) speech is rare."[5] Gratitude has been in ancient India a significant virtue and the epic records a few interesting observations on this subject. Rāma who called him who is ungrateful a lowling stated that even beasts do not eat the flesh of such men even when dead (*tān mṛtān api kravyādāḥ kṛtaghnān nopabhuñjate*).[6] Lakṣmaṇa told Sugrīva that the man who being helped first did not help in return should be killed[7] and that no atonement was prescribed for ingratitude although it was prescribed by sages for Brahman-murder, drinking, stealing, and for breaking vows.[8] Friendship does not find many references in gnomic verses in the epic; however, there is a saying attributed to Tārā that one should guard one's anger from a friend for it is difficult to safeguard friendship; the enmity arising from a friend cuts at the very root.[9] Similarly among the signs of one's impending destruction are given the suspicion of one's friends along with stealing others' property and abducting others' wives.[10] Another passage prescribes the manner in which an enemy who comes in search of refuge is to be treated. These verses quoted from an ancient sage called Kaṇḍu, the son of Kaṇva, enjoin that an enemy who seeks one's refuge should be protected even at the risk of life for it is a meritorious deed as important as even the Aśvamedha sacrifice.[11]

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1 BE IV, 7, 12; GE IV, 6, 13.
2 NW III, 72, 17. The translation is based on a co rrected reading of *Nihata* into *nihaita*.
3 NW V, 7, 10-11.
4 NW V, 95, 5 & 7 & 6.
5 NW V, 90, 72.
6 NW IV, 23, 29-30.
7 NW IV, 27, 12.
8 NW IV 27, 14.
9 NW IV, 16, 42 (not BE).
10 NW VI, 65, 25.
11 NW V, 93, 8-13.

§ 51. The Uttarakāṇḍa, too, contains a few gnomic verses dealing with human relations. In one Lakṣmaṇa consoled Rāma that one should not be too affectionate to his wives, sons, friends and people for separation from them is certain.[1] Again Agastya drew the moral after narrating the account of Rāvaṇa-versus-Arjuna conflict that a strong man should not be contemptuous towards another if he desires his own happiness.[2] Further, Rāma is said to have commended that one should accept the wholesome advice coming even from a young person.[3] Besides, the BE has a verse which signifies that fear comes from a relation, that fickleness is found in women and asceticism in Brahmans.[4] And a verse in the GE amplifies the proverb that an individual loses his powers of perception and intellect when his days are numbered: "he who is about to die smells not the odour of a blown-out lamp, nor hears the friends' advice nor sees Arundhatī."[5]

§ 52. Just as the didactic or gnomic verses, discussed above, reveal that a vast literature of "ascetic poetry", as Winternitz calls it, was current in India during the age reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa the numerous legends included therein prove the existence of a narrative literature. It has been already observed that story-telling had been in ancient India an important form of recreation (V § 69). Besides, from the period of the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads downwards we observe that stories had been made use of as illustrations of ritualistic and philosophical teachings. In the Rāmāyaṇa we find the same tendency modified only in one point, i.e. that the stories are cited in support of moral viewpoints.

§ 53. It is mainly in this manner that most of the legends are referred to in the genuine sections of the epic. There are also legends purporting to represent historical events and those explaining names and conditions of places, besides others which seek to extol heroes. While the references to these legends in the older parts of the epic are brief — often limited to a single verse or hemistich — the Bāla and the Uttara kāṇḍas narrate the story with all detail. A clear idea of the distribution of the references to legends in the Rāmāyaṇa can be had from the number of verses employed to allude to or relate stories in the various parts of the epic; the older parts of the Rāmāyaṇa (i.e. II-VI kāṇḍas, I is omitted in this consideration because the legends of this kāṇḍa are no doubt late Cf. I § 87) deal with no less than thirtyfive legends within 220 verses; the Bālakāṇḍa takes 560 verses to relate thirteen stories while the Uttarakāṇḍa narrates fifteen legends in 400 verses.[6]

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1 BE VII, 52, 12.
2 BE VII, 33, 22.
3 BE VII, 83, 20.
4 BE VI, 16, 9.
5 GE III, 59, 16.
6 The numbers here are only approximate because only the NW was used for the counting and because episodes such as Rāvaṇa's feats in the Uttarakāṇḍa and Sambūka's story as well as myths have not been included.

§ 54. To examine these legends which would give us a fair idea of the narrative literature current in ancient India during the period reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa we may begin with those alluded to in the kāṇḍas, II-VI. In order to support the view that mother should be obeyed in preference to the father are narrated the stories of Śakra who at his mother's behest killed his brothers and of Kāśyapa who through obedience to mother went to heaven.[1] The legend of Surabhi grieving over her sons seeks to extol maternal affection. The manner in which this story closes in the various recensions is interesting: in the GE and the BE it ends with the admission of Śakra that a son to a mother is greatly beloved while the NW continues it to expound the moral injunction that bulls should not be maltreated as they have been sent here by Brahmā to do penance.[2] This shows the manner in which a legend could be modified in ancient India to emphasize particular teachings and opinions.

§ 55. Similarly the stories of Jāmadagnya Rāma beheading his mother, of Kaṇḍu killing a cow and of Sagara's sons killing a great personage (*mahāsattva*) are quoted to show that obedience to the father is justifiable.[3] In the GE Jābāli narrated the tale of Ṛcīka and Śunaḥśepha to illustrate the view that parents being overcome with desire abandon their children.[4] Likewise Kaikeyī cited the story of Sagara who banished his son in support of her insistence that Rāma was sent to the forest, while a minister Siddhārtha corrected her quotation to emphasize that Sagara did so because Asamañjasa was wicked and drowned the children of the citizens in Sarayū.[5] And to indicate that a son saved his father, Daśaratha, who came from heaven, referred to Aṣṭāvakra who is said to have saved his virtuous father.[6]

§ 56. The best known legends in illustrating the ideal relationship between wife and husband have been in India those of Sāvitrī and Satyavān and of Arundhatī and Vasiṣṭha, which are only alluded to in the epic.[7] The BE mentions a series of other ideal couples who are famous in the ancient Indian legends such as Sūrya and Suvarcalā, Śakra and Śacī, the Moon and Rohiṇī, Agastya and Lopamudrā, Cyavana and Sukanyā, Kapila and Śrīmatī, Saudāsa and Madayantī, Sagara and Keśinī, and Naiṣadha and Damayantī.[8] Another legend purporting to stress the importance of relatives narrates how Bhūridyumna who went to heaven was brought back to earth on account of the lamentations of the relatives.[9]

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1 NW II, 21, 22-24.
2 NW II, 80, 17-34.
3 NW II, 21, 35-37.
4 GE II, 116, 10.
5 NW II, 39, 16 & 20.
6 NW VI, 100. 19.
7 NW III, 33, 6; III, 1, 70; I, 9, 37; BE VII, 42, 24.
8 BE V, 24, 9-12.
9 NW II, 85, 23-24.

§ 57. The Rāmāyaṇa refers also to two famous stories of Śibi who offered to sacrifice his own flesh in order to save a dove and of Alarka Rājarṣi who gave away his eyes to a Brahman, which extol liberality.[1] Upholding non-violence Sītā narrated to Rāma the story of the Muni who carried a sword with him while doing penance and who as a result was born in hell.[2]

§ 58. A different type from the above is represented by the tales associated with geographical places: the Pañcāpsara lake is associated with the seduction of Mandakarṇi by Apsarasas;[3] Vindhya is said to remain low at the behest of Agastya;[4] Taṇḍi, whose son died in the forest cursed the whole area to become desolate;[5] and similarly the sea to the south of the Pāṇḍyas became calm without waves due to the curse of a sage.[6]

§ 59. Legends purporting to represent "historical events"[7]— though distorted greatly due to the love of the supernatural — are associated with Yayāti[8] who descended from heaven after his merits exhausted, with Nahuṣa,[9] with Sagara whose birth despite an attempt at abortion is described and whose grandson was engaged in bringing down the celestial river,[10] with Triśaṅku who went to heaven with his body[11] and with the granting of a region by Manu to the Ikṣvākus.[12] Further, there were semi-mythological tales like the love affair of Purūravas and Urvaśī,[13] the defeat of Hiraṇyakaśipu by Indra[14] and the forgetfulness of Viśvāmitra who indulged in sensual pleasures for ten years and did not know that it was time to stop.[15]

§ 60. The other legends recorded in the older portions of the epic are more or less episodes in so far as they have some reference to the characters of the Rāmāyaṇa story. A story about Agastya describes how he came to Daṇḍaka forest to save the Brahmans from Vātāpi and Ilvala who killed them through guile.[16] Another deals with the enmity between Dundubhi and Vālin.[17] The legendary account of the creation of Sugrīva's mother by Prajāpati appears to be an interpolation.[18] Besides these a number of events dealt with in the epic seems to stand independently as stories. Mārīca's account of Rāma's valour as a boy of sixteen[19] and the story about Mārīca's disguise as a golden deer to

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1 NW II, 15, 4-5.
2 NW III, 10, 13-18.
3 NW III, 12, 11-17
4 NW III, 15, 15.
5 NW IV, 39, 8-14.
6 NW IV, 33, 27-30.
7 Historical only in the sense that their characters figure in the dynastic lists of Ancient India.
8 NW II, 88, 10; II, 14, 1; IV, 13, 3.
9 NW III, 72, 9, GE III, 23, 24; BE II, 64, 42.
10 NW II, 123, 17-20; II, 123, 24; V, 94, 7-9; V, 96, 27.
11 NW II, 123, 12.
12 NW II, 50, 11.
13 NW III, 53, 17.
14 NW V, 15, 28.
15 NW IV, 28, 6-9.
16 NW III, 14, 12-23.
17 NW IV, 6, 29-35; IV, 8, 2-37
18 NW VI, 4, 29-56.
19 NW III, 41, 1-19.

deceive Rāma and help Rāvaṇa to abduct Sītā,[1] the incident where Sītā was harassed by a crow and Rāma shot it[2] and the records of Rāvaṇa's prowess[3] are among such stories.

§ 61. These from the kāṇḍas II-VI are ample to show us how the legends were made use of by ancient Indians in their everyday conversations and arguments and also how the legends had arisen around places and personages. The other two kāṇḍas whose legends are of later development reveal the same factors with the only difference that the legends, here, are narrated in full. The legends of these kāṇḍas sometimes represent variations from the versions preserved in the Brāhmaṇas and the Purāṇas; although an analysis of them with reference to their origin and development is not undertaken here, as it is found unnecessary for our studies, a list of legends are given below so as to indicate that they were current in ancient India during the age reflected by the later portions of the Rāmāyaṇa.

Bālakāṇḍa

1. The story of the birth of Brahmadatta from Śūli and Somapā. NW I, 30, 36.
2. That of Bhārgava and Reṇukā. NW I, 47, 11.
3. The legend of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga as related to Sumantra by Sanatkumāra. NW I, 8, 6-76.
4. How the gods complained to Brahmā about Rāvaṇa and how Viṣṇu was sent to earth. NW I, 10, 59-76.
5. How Mālavas and Karuṣas were given a boon by Indra. NW I, 22, 16-30.
6. How Kānyakubja came to be named so. NW I, 30, 2-35.
7. The birth of Tāṭakā. NW I, 23, 4-13.
8. The story of Gautama and Ahalyā. NW I, 44, 11-33.
9. The birth of Viśvāmitra to Kuśanābha and the origin of Satyavatī. NW I, 31, 1-12.
10. The story of Viśvāmitra. NW I, 47, 16 — NW I, 61, 20.
11. That of Triśaṅku. NW I, 53, 7 — NW I, 56, 31.
12. That of Śunaḥśepha. NW I, 57, 5 — NW I, 58, 28.
13. The legend about Paraśurāma. NW I, 70, 18-24; I, 71, 7-9; I, 71, 26-30.

Uttarakāṇḍa

1. Hiraṇyakaśipu; Namuci; Śambara BE VII, 22, 24.
2. The Story of Gautama and Ahalyā BE VII, 30, 22-50.

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1 NW III, 42, 1-11.

2 NW II, 109, 39-48.

3 NW III, 36, 13,—15.

3. The story of Nṛga. BE VII, 53, 7-24; VII, 54; 5-19.
4. That of Nimi. BE VII, 55, 4-21.
5. The birth of Nimi and the origin of the words Janaka, Mithilā and Videha. BE VII, 57, 13-21.
6. The legend of Purūravas and Ụrvaśī. BE VII, 56, 26-29.
7. The birth of Vasiṣṭha. BE VII, 57, 5-9.
8. The story of Yayāti. BE VII, 58, 7-25; VII, 59, 1-23.
9. The birth of Lavaṇa, son of Madhu, BE VII, 61, 3-20.
10. How Saudāsa was made to offer human flesh to Vasiṣṭha. BE VII, 65, 10-39.
11. How Māndhātā subdued all kings on earth and desired the rulership of heaven. BE VII, 67, 5-22.
12. How Agastya obtained divine ornaments by releasing a celestial being who fed on dead bodies. BE VII, 77, 1-21; VII, 78, 1-19.
13. How Manu gave the remote kingdom of Vindhya and Śaivāla to Daṇḍa who was disobedient. BE VII, 79, 5-20.
14. The origin of the Daṇḍakāraṇya. BE VII, 80, 2-18; VII, 81, 1-20.
15. The story of Ila who changed his sex. BE VII, 87, 3-29; VII, 88, 5-24; VII, 89, 3-25; VII, 90, 4-24.

§ 62. The foregoing sections reveal that the society reflected by the Rāmāyaṇa paid due attention to a formal education which was imparted to the youngsters, though of the higher castes, in order to prepare them for their duties towards society; it had, further, evolved a number of subjects, a training in which was found desirable. Besides these which were formally studied there was a treasure-house of proverbs, didactic and gnomic verses and legends which taught the uneducated masses the fundamental facts of life and human relations. The educational value of this collection cannot be overestimated. The knowledge acquired by these means makes it possible to consider an Indian to be educated even though he be illiterate. This interesting fact still persists in modern India wherein an illiterate villager, who in all likelihood had never seen the inside of a school, may expound deep philosophical teachings or give wholesome advice with recourse to nothing but his repertoire of proverbs, gnomic verses and legends.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

§ 1. As the particular subject which we had chosen for our researches required, the foregoing chapters had to be for the major part descriptive. Our purpose was to collect and present in a comprehensive form the data which the Rāmāyaṇa affords for the reconstruction of the social conditions of ancient India. And as such very often the only conclusion we could derive was that the conditions depicted by the Rāmāyaṇa data were current in India during the period of composition of the epic, i.e. 4th century B.C. — 2nd century A.D. But it was not always beyond our purview to put forward certain theories as regards the epic and its contents. They have been discussed in the relevant sections in the thesis. However, three of the theories which the data from the Rāmāyaṇa appears to support are recapitulated here.

§ 2. Firstly, the Rāmāyaṇa story is pre-Buddhistic and the nucleus of the epic belongs to a period posterior to the Brāhmaṇas but prior to the Buddha. The geographical background of the story testifies to this. In the Rāmāyaṇa Ayodhyā is the capital of Kosala while in the Buddha's time it was Śrāvasti; and the shifting of the capital from Ayodhyā to Śrāvasti is familiar to the later portions of the epic.[1] Similarly the epic knows of Girivraja of Magadha but not Rājagṛha which was built at the time of the Buddha.[2] Yet another fact in support of the above argument is that the epic knows of South India and not the Himālayas as *the* place for ascetic practices. This state definitely reflects an earlier period than the Buddha for it implies that South India at the time depicted by the Rāmāyaṇa story was more secluded and was suitable for ascetic pursuits.[3] Even from the Uttarakāṇḍa where the division of Rāma's empire among his descendants is described, it is clear that the epic was not conversant with the type of imperial expansion which was evident in the policy of Bimbisāra. The Rāmāyaṇa depicts a more primitive political set-up which comprised numerous autonomous kingdoms ruled by independent rulers.[4] We may also take into consideration that Buddhist doctrines are conspicuous by their absence in the older parts of the epic. Though mainly an *argumentum ex silentio* this fact, too, may indicate that at least the older parts

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1 (II § 3).
2 (II § 9).
3 (II § 14) and (II § 33).
4 (II § 54).

of the epic preceded the Buddha.[1] While these indicate the antiquity of the Rāmāyaṇa story in relation to Buddhism, the data on city life clearly shows that the epic reflects a period later than the Brāhmaṇas.[2] It should be observed at this juncture that the Rāmāyaṇa does not give us any definite information on the antiquity of the text as is available to us. The text shows signs of later development and it is not possible for us on the evidence at our disposal to give even the earlier parts of the text a date prior to the 4th century A.D. Certain statements in the Rāmāyaṇa, which are not really interpolations represent a later date; a flagrant example is the doctrine of Brahman which, in the form the epic records it, belongs to the 3rd or the 2nd century B.C.[3]

§ 3. Secondly, the assumption of Winternitz that the Rāmāyaṇa reflects the society of *Eastern* India is amply supported by the social conditions depicted in the epic. While Winternitz assumed this rather hesitantly by noting the 'roughness' of the Mahābhārata civilization and the 'refinement' of that of the Rāmāyaṇa,[4] our study reveals that the Eastern origin of the Rāmāyaṇa is no longer a doubtful assumption but a proven fact. The epic evinces a remarkable degree of familiarity with the geography of Eastern India while it equally clearly proves by its many blunders that the Western regions were unknown lands.[5] In economic conditions too the Rāmāyaṇa in agreement with the Buddhist and Jain works — which certainly depict the eastern regions — represents cattle as the standard of exchange and agriculture as the usual occupation while the Mahābhārata has the horse for the former and the breeding of cattle for the latter.[6] The similarities in the social conditions reflected in the Rāmāyaṇa and the Buddhist Canon are remarkable[7] for they prove beyond any reasonable doubt that both these depict the same society, and, furthermore, these similarities are especially accentuated when they mark a departure from the conditions as seen in the Mahābhārata. Two other facts to be noted in this connection are that the Rāmāyaṇa which knows of many varieties of entertainment makes no reference at all to the more vigorous and warlike recreations such as chariot-racing and cattle-raids which the Vedas and the other epic describe often[8] and that the Rāmāyaṇa, agreeing again with the Buddhist

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1 (VIII § 78).
2 (III § 1)
3 (VIII § 10).
4 "This seems to indicate that the Mahābhārata belongs to a ruler, more warlike age, while the Rāmāyaṇa shows traces of a more refined civilization; unless, in order to explain this sharply marked difference between the two epics we assume that the Mahābhārata reflects a rougher civilization of *Western* India while the Rāmāyaṇa reflects a more refined civilization of Eastern India....." Winternitz ILW I p. 507.
5 (II §§ 18 & 20).
6 (III §§ 33, 45 & 46).
7 (IV § 18); (V § 61); (VII §§ 9, 35 & 56.)
8 (V § 94).

texts, represents though in a solitary verse the peculiar custom of exposing the dead in Eastern India.[1]

§ 4. Thirdly, the data on the social conditions in the Rāmāyaṇa seem to suggest that Laṅkā of the epic is a creation based on the actual conditions of Ceylon with which the Indian author or authors were familiar due to the lively contact between the two countries since Mauryan times. It is clear from our study that the geographical data in the Rāmāyaṇa are based on the knowledge of the geography of Ceylon.[2] And even the glorious descriptions of Laṅkā as abounding in gems may be a conscious representation of the fame of Ceylon for precious stones.[3] It should also be noted that the epic depicts Laṅkā as having an organized city life, which the records — though legendary — of the pre-historic times of Ceylon seem to justify.[4] Besides, the references to *Caitya-prāsādas* of Laṅkā which are reminiscent of the peculiar architectural design of the early Buddhist monuments of Ceylon cannot be dismissed as insignificant and must be considered as throwing much light on this probable relationship[5]. As such the conclusion that Ceylon was the model for the epic Laṅkā, even though this Laṅkā is not actually identifiable with Ceylon, appears irresistible.

§ 5. Any definite conclusions as regards the social conditions of ancient India cannot be arrived at with reference to the Rāmāyaṇa data alone, for this epic contains only a fraction of the information available for the reconstruction of the social history of the period reflected by it. Anyhow, a careful scrutiny of every aspect of the sources outlined by us in the first Chapter is essential for a complete grasp of the social conditions of the period, 4th century B.C. — 2nd century A.D. Our purpose has been to gather together and present critically all the information available from the Rāmāyaṇa for the use of the future scholars who may undertake a synthetic study of the subject when all the sources are individually dealt with as done in this work.

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1 (VIII § 133).
2 (II §§ 40-43).
3 (III § 37).
4 (III § 5).
5 (VIII § 59).

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INDEX

GENERAL INDEX

N. B.—The names of books and authors are in italics.

Abduction, 192-194, 211, 279, 320.
Abhijñāna Śākuntalam, 6.
Ābhīras, 88.
Adharma, see Dharma.
Ādikavi, 20.
Ādikāvya, 2, 4, 5, 20.
Ādityas, 256-257.
Adultery, 191-193, 195, 207, 279.
Āgama (authority), 249.
Āgamas, 243, 308.
Āgneyī, 59.
Agni, 256-257, 265.
Agnihotra, see Fire-worship.
Agnimitra, 94.
Agriculture, 13, 99, 108-109.
Agricultural calamities, 110.
Aguru, 142.
Ahiṃsā, 109.
Āhisthala, 59.
Ailadhāna, 59.
Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, 137.
Aitihāsika, 19.
Ajakūla, 57-58.
Ajanta, 151, 186, 190.
Ajātaśatru, 55.
Ajina, 100, 152.
Ākhyāna (ākhyāyana) 2, 12, 18-19.
Ākrīḍa, 171.
Akṣa, 173,
Akṣara, 181.
Akṣaya Vaṭa, 62, 264.
Alaṅkāras, 310.
Alberuni, 35.
Amarakaṇṭaka, 59, 60.
Amaratva, 272, 274.
Amarāvatī, 48.
Aṃśudhāna, 59.
Ānandavardhana, 23.
Anārya, 80-81.
Anāvṛṣṭi, 107.
Aṅga, 52-53
Aṅgadīyāpurī, 78.
Aṅgāraka, 232-233, 312.
Aṅguttara Nikāya, 82, 214, 230, 247, 273, 276, 278-279.
Añjanaparvata, 70.
Anna, 145.
Antaḥpura, 96, 168.
Antarātman, 247.
Anugītā, 243,
Anukramaṇī, 30.
Anumāna, 249-250.
Anurādhagāma, 91.
Anurādhapura, 114, 190, 266.
Anuyātrā, 165.
Ānvikṣikī, 244.
Āpāna (śālā), 96, 148.
Aparaparvataśilā, 59.
Aparatāla, 57-58.
Āpastamba Grhyasūtra, 21, 47, 90, 300.
Apsaras, 180, 183.
Apūpa, 146.
Arahant, 133.
Āraṇyaka, 47.
Araṭṭha, 71.
Archaeology, 45, 91, 230.
Architects, 112.
Architecture, 97, 112.
Ariṣṭanaga, 70.
Arrian, 50.
Artha, 2, 143, 149, 225, 273.
Arthaśāstra, 49-50, 93, 103-104, 106, 113, 278.
Arthaśāstra, 310.
Artisans, 112.
Artistic technique, 4.
Arundhatī, 312.
Aryaṃan, 256.
Ārya (in non-ethnological sense), 81.
Āryan, 230, 237, 296, 311.
Aryanization of South India, 13-14, 44, 71.
Āsanagṛha, 171.
Ascetics, 160-161.
Asceticism, 99-100, 131, 148, 161, 211, 236, 251, 252, 254, 255, 259, 270, 271, 283-290, 321.
Ascetic poetry, 317.
Āśleṣā, see Sārpa.
Aśoka, 52, 112, 172, 278.
Āśrama, 142-144, 285, 300, 304.
Aṣṭādhyāyī, 39.
Aṣṭāpada, 173.
Astrology, 15, 232-234, 311, 313, 314,
Astronomy, 37, 227-228, 233-234. 311-314.
Aśvaghoṣa, 6, 39, 49-50, 186.
Aśvamedha, 205, 293-294, 306, 320.
Aśvins, 257.
Atharvapariśiṣṭa, 314.
Atharvaśiras, 307.
Atharvaveda, 7, 47, 225, 238-239, 307.
Atirātra, 293.
Ātmabhāva, 247.
Ātman, 226, 247, 269, 281.
Aṭṭa (Aṭṭāla) 92, 97.
Aupamya (Upamāna), 249.
Austric influence, 17.
Āvāsa, 97.
Avatāra, see incarnation and incarnations of Viṣṇu.
Avestan, 275.
Ayodhyā, 51-52, 54, 57-61, 63, 65, 71, 77-78, 91-94, 96-97, 117, 120. 148, 174, 326.
Āyurveda, 155, 315; see also Medicine.

Bāhika, 58-59.
Bahubhauma, 97.
Bahusuvarṇaka, 293.
Balhīka, 77.
Bali, 292.
Ballad recitation, 174-175, 177-178.
Bāṇa, 235.
Bārāṇasī, 117.
Bathers, 111.
Bathing, 155-156.
Bauddhānām Nagara, 57-58.
Bauddhāyana Dharmasūtra, 47, 90.
Beasts of Burden, 120.
Beds, 157-158.
Bengali versions, 7.
Beings, 221.
Bhaga, 256-257, 265.
Bhagavadgītā, 177, 223, 243, 247, 248, 269, 317.
Bhāgya, 227.
Bhakta, see Bhakti.
Bhakti, 146, 259-260.
Bharhut, 48, 150, 155, 173, 186.
Bhāruṇḍā, 59.
Bhaṭṭi, 32.
Bhāva, 181.
Bhavabhūti, 6, 21, 44, 148, 201.
Bhavana, 96.
Bheri, 178-179.
Bhikṣu, 254-255.
Bhūta-motif, 114.
Bhūtātman, 247.
Bijavāṭyā, 59.
Bimbisāra, 55-56, 79, 326.
Bird-catchers, 111.
Boats, 121-122.
Bodhakas, 112.
Books, 308-309.
Brahmā, 222-223, 245-246, 256-258, 265, 270, 289, 322.
Brahmabhūta, 247.
Brahmacārin, 143-144, 286, 300, 302, 304.
Brahmacarya (-vrata), 143-144.
Brahmaloka, 3, 218, 270-271, 289.
Brahman, 126, 131-133, 225-226, 245-247, 250, 253, 271.
Brāhmaṇas, 9, 21, 47, 90, 104, 105, 275, 290, 300, 321, 324, 326-327.
Brahmanism, 255.
Brahman-murder, 127, 187, 320.
Brahmarākṣasas, 86, 291.
Brahmaratha, 121.
Brahmarṣi, 126, 289.
Brahmans (or Brahmins), 42, 106, 125-130, 132-133, 148, 160-161, 163-165, 176-177, 200-201, 210, 232, 235-237, 244-245, 253, 290, 294, 297, 303, 305-308, 311, 316, 321, 323.
Brahmasamāja, 305.
Brahmasthāna, 270,
Brahmībhūta, 247.
Brewers, 111.
Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 9, 44-45, 176, 218, 275, 305.
Brhaspati, 256, 303, 312.
Bṛhatkalpasūtra, 49.
Bṛhatkathā, 7.
Brother, 135.
Buddha, 236, 251, 290, 312, 326-327.
Buddhacarita, 39, 50, 186, 190.
Buddhaghoṣa, 11.
Buddhist Canon, 246-247; see Pāli Canon and Buddhist Literature.
Buddhist Commentaries, 11, 47-48.
Buddhist Literature, 7, 9-11, 17, 24, 39, 47-48, 51, 65, 82, 91, 95, 99, 104-105, 109-110, 130, 132, 137, 145, 149, 150-151, 164, 167, 173-175, 191, 199, 220, 232, 238, 241-242, 273, 275, 277, 279, 284, 296, 304, 307, 318, 327-328.
Buddhism, 14, 38, 109, 116, 217-218, 224, 245, 247-248, 255, 266, 271, 274, 293, 317, 327.
Butchers, 111, 116.

Caitraratha, 59-60.
Caityas, 252, 265-266.
Caityagṛha, 96, 98, 265.
Caityaprāsāda, 265-266, 328.
Caityavṛkṣa, 265.
Camel, 116.
Campā, 94.
Caṇḍālas, 130-131, 153.
Candana, 142.
Candrabhāga, 71.
Chandragupta, Maurya, 50.
Candrasya giri, 70.
Cane-workers, 113.
Caravans, 116.
Carpenters, 113.
Cart, 120-121.
Cārukarma, 114.
Cārvākas, 266, 281.
Caryāgṛha, 97.
Caste, 124-133, 276-278.
Cattle, 102-103, 115, 120.
Cattle-breeding, 99, 103, 108-109.
Caturaṅgabala, 173-174.
Celikā, 180.
Ceylon, 11, 13-15, 43-44, 67-69, 88, 91, 97, 100, 105, 114, 119, 146, 148, 154, 185, 190, 212, 217, 230, 237, 253, 266, 292, 315, 328.
Chala, 249.
Chaldeans, 314.
Chandas, 309.
Chāndogya Upaniṣad, 9, 311.
Change of sex, 187.
Chariots, 121.
Chastity, 207.
Chess, 173-174.
Child-birth, 107, 186-187.
Child-marriage, 197-199.
China, 117.
Cīra, 100.
Citrakūṭa, 61-63, 65-66, 69, 119, 121.
Citraśālā, 97, 114.
Class distinction, 125.
Classical Sanskrit, 21.
Clowns, 172, 174.

Cobblers, 113.
Coitus, 186, 189-190, 192-193, 198.
Colombo Exhibition, 266.
Colonization of South India, 253; see Aryanization of South India.
Colours of garments, 152-153
Commensality, 124.
Conchshell, 178, 180.
Connubium, 124.
Consecration, 129, 174, 176, 191, 206, 210, 239, 252, 289.
Conversation, 163.
Cooks, 111.
Corns, 146.
Cosmology, 72, 217-220.
Coṣya, 145.
Cotton, 152.
Couches, 157.
Courtship, 188-190.
Co-wives, 200.
Cow-worship, 262; see Theriolatry.
Cremation, 296.
Curse, 160, 235-237.

Daiva, 226-227.
Dakma, 296.
Dakṣiṇā, 102.
Dakṣiṇātya (patha), 52-53.
Dānastuti, 18-19.
Dance, 171, 174, 181-183, 210.
Daṇḍaka, 71.
Daṇḍakāraṇya, 60-61, 63, 66, 78, 144.
Dāruparvata, 171.
Dasaratha Jātaka, 9, 11.
Dasyus, 88-89, 107.
Dātṛ, 110.
Daughters, 137-138.
Death, 294-299.
Decorations, 94-95, 170, 239.
Dehī, 247; see Ātman.
Devāgāra 264.
Devālaya, 264.
Devana, 173.
Devatāgāra, 264.
Devāyatana, 96, 264-265.
Dhammapada 245, 280.
Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, 137, 167.
Dhanada, 256; see Vaiśravaṇa.
Dhanañjaya, 6.
Dhaneśa, 257; see Vaiśravaṇa.
Dhanurveda, 311.
Dhanvantari, 315.
Dharma, see Yama.
Dharma, 2, 108, 124, 126-127, 129, 134, 135, 140, 143, 144, 149, 163, 172, 194, 195, 202, 206, 211, 223, 225, 251, 253, 254, 273-286 293, 296, 301, 305, 318.
Dharmaphala, 285.
Dharmāraṇya, 56.
Dharmasāstras, 4, 162-163, 194, 205, 244, 275, 284, 300, 304, 305.
Dharmasāstra, 310.
Dharmasūtra, 47.
Dhātā, 256-257, 265.
Dhūmaketu, 312.
Dhvanyāloka, 23.
Dice, 173.
Dīgha Nikāya, 51, 53, 146, 179, 181. 230, 232, 241, 246, 276-278, 296, 307.
Diṇḍima, 178-179.
Dion Chrysostomos, 12 37.
Dīpavaṃsa, 68.
Dīpavṛkṣa, 93.
Disposal of the dead, 295-296.
Disrepute, 142.
Divinity of Brahmans, 127; see Brahmans.
Division of labour, 110, 124.
Divorce, 202; see marriage.
Dowry, 199, 216; see marriage.
Drama, 166, 173-175 309.
Draviḍa, 52.
Dreams, 230-232.
Dress of Ascetics, etc., 254-255.
Drinks, 149-150.
Dṛṣadvatī, 58.
Dukūla, 152.
Dundubhi, 178-179.
Dūta, 118.
Dvāratoraṇa, 97.

Eclipse, 312.
Education, Chapter IX and 209-210,216.
Ekaśalya (śāla), 59.
Ekaveṇī,156. 159.
Elephants, 120.
Embracing, 159. 161, 164, 166-168, 190.
Entertainment, 111ff.
Epic Sanskrit, 21-23.

Famine, 107, 110.
Farewell, 164-165.
Fate (fatalism), 224-227, 237, 281.
Father, 134-135.
Fire-worship, 265, 271, 287, 291, 297.
Fishing, 111.
Floors, 98.
Flowers, 154, 156.
Flying, 122.
Food, 111, 145 ff.
Food-dressers, 111.
Fords, 119-120.
Forest-dwelling, 253; see Vānaprastha.
Fruit, 146-147.
Funerals, 175, 239, 296-299.

Gambling, 173-174.
Gaṇa (trade guilds), 118.
Gandhāra, 77-79, 88.
Gandharvas, 180-181, 315.
Gandharvaloka, 218.
Gaṅgā, 54, 56-62, 71, 77.
Garbha, 96.
Gārgya, 181, 254.
Gārhasthasya dharma, 276.
Garlands, 107, 111.
Garments, 150-153.

Garuḍa, 265.
Gautama Dharmasūtra, 90.
Gayā, 78.
Gāyatrī, 131, 265, 291.
Ghaṭa (a clay boat), 122.
Gihi-dhamma, 276.
Girivraja, 53, 55-59, 72, 91, 94, 117, 173, 183, 326.
Girnar Inscription of Rudradāman I, 39.
Glass-makers, 113.
Gnomic verse, 317-321, 325.
Godāvari, 62-63, 66, 69.
Gods, 256-260.
Gokarṇa, 57, 77-78.
Golāṅgūlas, 84.
Gomaya, 230-231.
Gomatī, 59-60, 62, 69-70, 77.
Gomedha, 293.
Gonaddha, 64.
Gopa, 181.
Gopura, 92, 97.
Gosava, 193.
Goṣṭhi, 173.
Gotra, 133.
Grahayuddha, 15, 312.
Grāma (music), 182.
Grammar, 301, 309-310.
Greeks, 12, 91, 314.
Gṛha, 96.
Gṛhamukhya, 96.
Gṛhastha, 143-145, 254, 304.
Gṛhātigṛhaka, 171.
Gṛhyasūtras, 47, 300.
Guru, 135, 139, 303-304.

Haihayas, 77-78, 88-89.
Hair-style, 156.
Hanuman-cult, 262.
Harems, 200.
Harivaṃśa, 39.
Harmya, 95-96.
Harṣacarita, 236.
Hartal, 112.
Hasta, 234.
Hastināpura, 57-58.
Hemp, 152.
Hermitages, 100, 300.
Himālayas, 57, 65, 70, 326.
Hinduism, 266.
Hiraṇya, 103-104.
Hiraṇyanābha, 69-70.
Hiraṇyodā, 59.
Historicity, 9, 41-45.
Hitopadeśa, 172, 227, 267.
Horoscope, 234.
Horse, 103, 120-121, 174.
Hospitality, 163-164.
Hrādinī, 59.
Hunters, 111.
Hunting, 171-172, 178.
Husband, 204-209.
Hypergamy, 131.

Ihāmṛga, 114.
Ikṣvākus, 41-43, 51, 60.
Illiad, 37.
Imaginative poetry, 5.
Immortality, 273-274.
Incantation, 238-239.
Incarnations of Viṣṇu, 39-40, 161-162, 222-224, 259.
Incest, 195.
Individual's qualities, 139-142.
Indra, 169, 222, 257, 265, 288.
Indradhvaja, 169.
Indraloka, 270.
Indranīla, 105.
Industries, 112.
Indus Valley Civilization, 90; see Mohenjo-daro.
Inscriptions, 45-46.
Inscriptions of Aśoka, 278.
Interpolations, 3, 32-36, 40, 52-53, 72, 91, 132, 137, 151, 204, 207, 224, 234, 244, 246, 248, 251, 256, 274, 311, 313-314, 321, 327.
Irrigation, 110.
Isurumuni Vihāra, 190.
Iṣṭāpūrta, 285.
Itihāsa, 2, 19, 41, 308.
Ivory workers, 113.

Jāhnavī, 55; see Gaṅgā.
Jain Canon, 23, 49, 52-54, 91, 220, 300.
Jainism, 109, 225, 255, 293, 317.
Jain Literature, 12, 17, 47-49, 51, 88, 95, 99, 105, 109-110, 133, 146, 169, 191, 199, 214, 241-242, 275, 318.
Jain Rāmāyaṇa, 25.
Jaladvīpa, 76.
Jalakriyā, 298.
Jambūprastha, 59.
Jambudvīpa, 71, 76.
Jāmbūnada, 103.
Jānakīharaṇa, 7, 28.
Janapadas, 116.
Janārdana, 256.
Janasthāna, 62, 64, 66, 69.
Jātaka, 9-12, 27, 38, 48, 90, 116-117, 130, 145, 169, 180, 203, 214, 238, 241, 273, 279, 280, 290, 300, 304.
Jātakamālā, 49.
Jaṭāmaṇḍala, 100.
Jātarūpa, 103.
Jāruthya, 293.
Java, 76, 117.
Jayaddisa, Jātaka, 10.
Jokes, 172; see clowns.
Junagarh Inscription of Rudradāman I, 71, 82.
Junagarh Inscription of Skandagupta, 89.
Jyeṣṭhā, 233.

Kailāsa, 67, 70, 77, 97.
Kākapakṣa, 156.
Kakṣa, 96.
Kāla, 225-226.
Kalaśi, 179.
Kālidāsa, 6, 24, 38, 40, 64, 119, 186.
Kalindī, see Yamunā.
Kaliṅganagara, 59-60.

Kalpasūtra, 47.
Kāma, 2, 143, 149, 225, 258, 273.
Kāmasya gṛha, 171.
Kāmasūtra, 50, 173.
Kamban, 7.
Kaṃbala, 152.
Kāmbojas, 71, 88.
Kampilla, 55, 56.
Kāñcana, 103.
Kañcuka, 151.
Kanyādāna, 102, 152.
Kanyādhana, 199, 215.
Kānyakubja, 55-56.
Kapivatī, 59.
Karaṇī sutā, 131.
Karma, 224, 237, 266-274.
Karmabhūmi, 268.
Karṇadhāra, 122.
Kārtikeya, 257-258, 265.
Karuṣā, 54.
Kārupatha, 78-79.
Kāśī, 52-53, 77-78.
Kaśmiri Rāmāyaṇa, 25.
Kathenotheism, 258.
Kaṭhopaniṣad, 273.
Kātyāyana, 49.
Kauśikā, 55-56, 181-183.
Kauśikītīrtha, 57.
Kautukamaṅgala, 292.
Kavāṭayantra, 97.
Kāvya, 2, 4-6.
Kāvyarasa, 309.
Kavyāśekhara, 7.
Kekayas, 53, 77, 102.
Keśinī, 77.
Ketu, 232.
Khanitrapiṭaka, 100.
Khoh Copper Plate Inscription, 40.
Khuddakapāṭha, 169.
Khuddāla, 110.
Kingship, 275.
Kirātas, 88-89.
Kiṣkindhā (Kiṣkindhya) 65-67, 69, 72, 91, 94, 96-97, 151.
Kissing, 167-168, 190.
Koṇa, 179-180.
Koṣakārāṇām pattana, 117.
Kosala, 51-52, 79-80.
Kosambi, 64.
Koṣṭhāgāra, 96.
Kraals, 111, 171.
Krauñca (aṭavi *or* vana),65-66, 77-78.
Krauñcālaya, 65.
Krīḍāgṛha, 97, 171.
Krodhāgāra, 200.
Kṛṣṇa legends, 79.
Kṣatradharma, 278.
Kṣatriyas, 42, 124-125, 128-132, 145, 160, 176-177, 195, 200, 214-216, 239, 253, 278, 303, 311, 316.
Kṣetraja, see Levirate.
Kukkuṭavrata, 190.
Kula, 134.
Kuladharma, 276-277.
Kulīnā, 59, 125.
Kuliṅgā, 58-59.
Kumāradāsa, 7.
Kumārasambhava, 6, 186.
Kumbhathūṇa, 179.
Kuṇāla, 52.
Kūrca, 156.
Kurujāṅgala, 57-58.
Kurukṣetra, 57-58, 72.
Kuśāvati, 78-79.
Kuśilava, 19, 177.
Kūṭa, 111.
Kūṭāgāra, 98.
Kuthā, 158.
Kuṭhāra, 110.
Kuṭumbibhavana, 96.
Kuvera, 257-258, 265; see Vaiśravaṇa.

Lagna, 234.
Lakṣmī, 258.
Lamps, 158.
Laṅkā, 64, 66-70, 91, 93-94, 96, 98, 105, 116-117, 122, 148, 161, 182, 328.
Laṅkāpura, 68, 91.
Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra, 49.
Lapidaries, 113.
Latāgṛha, 171.
Lauhityā (Lohitya) 59.
Laukika dharma, 276.
Laya, 181-182.
Legends, 187, 193, 195, 198, 204, 207, 209, 316, 321-325.
Lehya, 145.
Levirate, 201, 203.
Liberation, 273.
Licchavis, 55.
Linen, 152.
Liṅga, 261: see Śiva.
Literary Criticism, 310.
Lohitasāgara, 117.
Lokapālas, 256.
Love, 187-190.
Lovers, 170.
Lunar mansions; see Nakṣatra.

Machinery, 113-114.
Maḍḍuka, 179.
Madhuparka, 164.
Madhupurī, 78.
Madhurā, 78-79.
Madhyadeśa, 77.
Magadha, 19, 52, 55, 175, 177.
Magha, 233.
Magic, 238-239, 292-294.
Magical symbols, 239.
Mahābhārata, 2, 19-24, 26, 33, 39-40, 50, 56, 58-59, 63, 78, 82, 91, 103, 109, 132, 154, 168, 176-177, 183, 192-194, 196, 198, 201, 203, 206, 213-214, 221-222, 243, 247, 278, 307, 327.
Mahābhāṣya, 21, 37.
Mahājanapadas, 51, 53-54.
Mahājavā, 61, 64.
Mahākāvya, 24-25, 39.
Mahāmātras, 112.
Mahāmāyūrī, 68.
Mahānīla, 105.

Mahāprāsthanika, 293.
Mahāvagga, 52.
Mahāvaṃsa, 68, 91.
Mahāvastu, 11.
Mahāvibhāṣā, 28.
Mahāvīra, 236; see Jainism and Jain Literature.
Mahāvīracarita, 6, 44-45.
Mahāyāna, 68.
Mahendra, 67, 70, 72, 252, 257.
Mahendragiri, 65-66, 69-70.
Maheśvara, 256.
Mahiṣmatī, 77, 78.
Mahissati, 64.
Mahodaya, 55-56; see Kānyakubja.
Makara, 114.
Malavā, 54.
Malaya (as Janapada), 54.
Malaya, 65, 67, 70.
Malaya (in Laṅkā), 68, 69.
Mālinī, 57-58, 61, 63.
Mallabhūmi, 78.
Malyavān, 66, 69.
Mandākinī, 61-63, 65, 69.
Mandara, 67, 70.
Mantrarāmāyaṇa, 7.
Mantrin, 176.
Mantriparisad, 118.
Manu, 60, 125.
Manusmṛti, 47, 101, 105, 124, 144, 162-163, 172, 176, 194, 205, 235, 244, 284, 291, 300, 304-305, 308.
Mārga (in Music), 181-182.
Market, 116-117
Marriage, 194-204, 239, 292; see Wedding rites.
Marriageable age, 197-199.
Maruts, 256-257.
Masons, 113.
Mātaṅgavana, 65.
Materialism, 244, 250-251; see Nihilism.
Mathurā, 79, 117.
Mātrā (in Music), 181-182.
Matsyas, 52.
Mauryan Empire, 52-53, 91, 266, 328.
Māyā, 240, 246.
Mechanical birds, 158.
Mechanics, 114.
Mechanisation of Industries, 113.
Medical lore, 315.
Medicine, 238, 314-315.
Megasthenes, 50, 91.
Meghadūta, 6, 64, 119.
Menstruation, 186-187, 190, 198.
Merits; see Puṇyakarma.
Meru, 70.
Metal work, 113.
Metres, 23-25.
Middleman, 115.
Milindapañhā, 48.
Military power, 141.
Mimāṃsā, 250,
Mining, 113.
Miracles, 241.
Mithilā, 53-55, 91.
Mitra, 256.
Mixed Castes, 130-131.
Mleccha, 53, 88-89.
Mohenjodaro, 309, 314; see Indus Valley Civilization.
Mokṣa, 2, 4, 143, 273-274.
Monism, 246; see Brahman.
Monogamy, 200-201, 271.
Morality, 108, 126, 140-141, 175, 279-285.
Mother, 134-135, 210-211.
Mountain-worship, 263.
Mourning, 95.
Mṛdaṅga, 178-180.
Muhūrta, 233; see Astrology.
Mukta, 105; see Mokṣa and Liberation.
Mūla, 232.
Muṇḍakopaniṣad, 143.
Muni, 253.
Muraja, 179.
Murava, 179.
Mūrcanā, 181-182.
Music, 111, 171, 174-175, 177-183, 210, 261.
Mythology, 9, 16-17, 123, 180, 187, 217-218, 221-222, 239.

Nagaradvāra, 92.
Nagarapradhāna, 125.
Nāgas, 68, 88, 265.
Naimiṣa forest, 77.
Nairṛti, 232.
Nakṣatra, 232-234, 313, 314.
Nalopākhyāna, 196.
Nandigrāma, 69, 70, 99.
Nārada, 181.
Nāradasmṛti, 203.
Naraka, 220, 272-273.
Naramedha, 293.
Nārāyaṇa, 258; see Viṣṇu.
Narmadā, 71, 77.
Nasik Cave Inscription of Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi, 211.
Nasik Cave Inscription of Nahapāna, 57, 264.
Nasik Cave Inscription of Vāsiṣṭhīputra Pulumāvi, 71.
Nāṭaka, 174.
Natural phenomena, 227-228.
Nāṭyarasa, 309.
Nāṭyaśāstra, 182, 309.
Navāgryāyaṇapūjā, 110, 293.
Navigation, 117, 121, 122.
Nāvika, 122.
Necklace, 104-106.
Nigama, 90, 118.
Nihilism, 244, 251, 272, 283.
Niḥśreyasaphala, 250.
Nila, 61-62.
Nimitta, 227; see Omens.
Niraya, see Naraka.
Nirguṇa Brahman, 246.
Nirvāṇa, 274.
Niṣādas, 60, 62, 81-82, 102, 131.
Niṣka, 102, 104, 106, 153.
Niṣkuṭa, 98.

Nītiśāstra, 310.
Niyoga, see Levirate.
Nṛpamārga, 92; see Rājamārga.
Numismatic data, 46-47.
Nyagrodha, 61-62.
Nyāya, 249-250.

Oath, 234-235.
Omens, 227-230, 252.
Ornaments, 107, 153-155.

Pack-bulls, 120.
Pack-horses, 120.
Pāduka, 151.
Pahlavas, 88-89.
Painting, 114.
Palaesimundu, 69.
Pāli Canon, 9, 11, 23, 47, 52, 54, 65, 168-169; see Buddhist Canon.
Pampā, 65, 66, 69-70.
Pāna, 145-146.
Pānabhūmi, 98.
Paṇava, 179.
Pañcāladeśa, 57-58, 67.
Pañcāpsara, 61, 64.
Pañcaśikha, 181.
Pañcatantra, 172.
Pañcavaṭī, 61-62, 64-66.
Pāṇini, 5, 21-22, 37, 39, 49.
Pāṇivādaka, 178.
Pāpa, 284-285, 291.
Paramatthajotikā, 56.
Paramātman, 245-246.
Parāśara, 313.
Parikhā, 92.
Parivrājaka, 254-255.
Parks, 93, 98, 170-171.
Parṇaśālā, 100.
Pārśvagiri, 67.
Parvata, 181.
Paṭaha, 178-179.
Pātāla, 224.
Pāṭalīputra, 94.
Patañjali, 22. 49.
Pathos, 5, 33.
Patiṭṭhāna, 64.
Pāṭyājāti, 181.
Paumacariya, 7, 40.
Paurāṇika, 19, 310.
Pauruṣī, 69-70.
Pavana, 252, 257.
Pāyāsa, 146.
Pecus, 103.
Perfumers, 111.
Perfumes, 107, 156.
Personal beauty, 184-186.
Pets, 98.
Phalaśruti, 3, 32, 125, 259, 269, 294.
Phalgunī, 233-234.
Phallus; see Liṅga.
Pillailokam Jīyar, 32.
Piśācas, 83, 85, 221.
Pitṛdevatās; see Pitṛs.
Pitṛloka, 271.
Pitṛs, 221, 251-252, 293.
Planets, 233-234, 311-314.
Polyandry, 201, 203.
Polygamy,134, 199-201.
Polytheism, 258.
Prācya, 52-53.
Pradakṣiṇā, 159, 161, 164-165, 167.
Prāgjyotiṣa, 55-56.
Prāgvaṭa, 59.
Prajāpati, 256.
Prākāra, 92.
Prakrits, 21-23, 37,175,182.
Prakṛti, 248.
Pralambha, 57-58.
Pramadāvana, 98.
Pramāṇas, 249-250.
Prāṇāyāma, 249.
Prapatti, 260; see Bhakti.
Prāsāda 95, 96.
Prāśanīya, 146.
Prasii, 53.
Prasravaṇagiri, 65, 66, 69.
Prātarāśana, 146.
Pratīcya, 53.
Pratiṣṭhāna, 77.
Pratolī, 93.
Pratyagātman, 247.
Pratyakṣa, 249-250.
Pravāla, 105.
Prāya, 159.
Prayāga, 61-62.
Prayer rooms, 264,302.
Precious stones, 92, 93, 98, 103, 105, 153-154.
Pregnancy, 187, 198.
Pretas, 221, 229.
Priests, 127, 254.
Processions, 170.
Prostitutes, 190-191.
Proverbs, 316-318, 325.
Ptolemy, 69.
Pukkasa, 131.
Punarvasu, 233-234, 312-313.
Puṇḍarīka, 293.
Puṇyakarma, 268-269, 271,285.
Pur, 90.
Purāṇas, 19, 21, 23-24, 39, 43-44, 66, 172, 210, 216, 222, 324.
Purdah, 213-214.
Purodhasa, 127—128.
Purohita, 128, 254, 290.
Puruṣa, 248.
Puruṣārthas, 143, 273, 280.
Pūṣan, 256.
Puṣkalāvatī, 78-79, 117.
Puṣkara, 57, 77-78.
Puṣpagṛha, 171.
Puṣya, 233-234.
Putra (etymology) 137.

Rafts, 122.
Rāga, 181-182.
Raghuvaṃśa, 6, 40, 172.
Rāhu, 312.
Rājadharma, 278.
Rājagṛha, 53, 56, 326.
Rājamārga, 92-93, 119.
Rājanya, 125, 129: see Kṣatriyas.

Rājaśāstra, 311.
Rājasūya, 176, 293.
Rājataraṅginī, 36.
Rājāvaliya, 35, 43, 68.
Rājaveśma, 96.
Rākṣasas, 83-89, 105, 221.
Rāmacaritamānasa, 7.
Rāmagiri, 64, 78.
Rāmaism 258, 259, 262.
Rāmapūrvatāpinī Upaniṣad, 9.
Rāmatīrtha, 69-70.
Rāmeśvara, 262.
Rāmopākhyāna, 26, 28, 40.
Rape, 198.
Rasa theory, 309.
Rāśi; see Zodiac.
Ratana Sutta, 238.
Rathyā, 93, 119.
Ratnin, 176.
Rāvaṇakoṭuva, 68.
Rāvanavadha, 28, 32.
Rebirth, 266-274.
Receiving visitors, 160-164.
Recensions, 25-29.
Relations, 138.
Religion, 158, 162, 224, 239, 242, 250-266.
Ṛgveda, 6-9, 13, 16, 18, 88, 90, 95,104, 121, 202, 217, 224, 226, 239, 243, 275, 301, 307, 311.
Rice, 115.
Ritual, 127, 130-131, 133, 150, 158-159, 195, 205, 239, 251-252, 254, 256, 287, 290-294, 307-308, 311.
River worship, 262-263.
Roads, 119; see Rājamārga and Rathya.
Road-building, 119.
Rohinī, 312.
Royal ownership of land, 105-106.
Ṛṣis, 253-254.
Ṛṣyamūka, 65-67, 69.
Ṛta, 275.
Ṛtvij, 254.
Rückert, 6.
Rudra, 222; see Śiva.
Rudras, 256-257.
Rukma, 103.

Sabhā, 96, 168.
Saccakiriya, 238.
Sacrifice; see Ritual.
Sādhu, 254.
Sāgarānupaja deśa, 70.
Saguṇa Brahman, 246.
Sāhityadarpaṇa, 173.
Sahya, 67, 70.
Śailūṣa, 77, 174-175, 191.
Śaivāla, 77-78.
Śaivism, 40, 257-258, 260-261.
Śakas, 53, 88, 89.
Śāketa, 51-52, 64-65; see Ayodhyā.
Sakkapañha Sutta, 181.
Śākuntala, 6, 172.
Śālmalī, 57-59.
Śālmalī tree (in hell), 272-273.
Salokatā, 270.
Śālūkinī nadī, 69-70.
Śalyavanadurga, 59.
Samādhi, 269.
Samāja, 174.
Sāma Jātaka, 10.
Sāmaveda, 301, 304, 307.
Sambulā Jātaka, 10.
Saṃhitas; see Vedas.
Saṃkopana, 70.
Samrāt, 52.
Samudragupta, 14.
Samvāda sūkta, 18.
Saṃyutta Nikāya, 241, 280.
Sānchi, 48.
Saṅgītaratnākara, 182.
Sañjavana, 98.
Śaṅkara; see Śiva.
Śaṅkara, 246.
Sāṅkāsya, 56, 57.
Sāṅkhya, 247-248.
Sāṅkhyapravacanabhāṣya, 248.
Sannyāsin, 143, 255.
Sanskrit, 22, 37.
Santānaka, 259,
Śānti, 292.
Saptajāti, 181.
Saptarṣi, 313.
Saptaspardhā, 59.
Saptasvara, 181.
Śaradaṇḍā, 57-58.
Śaraṇāgati, 4, 260.
Sarasvatī, 57, 59, 71.
Śārathi, 176.
Sarayū, 51, 54, 62, 77.
Sārpa, 234.
Sarvamedha, 293.
Śaśāṅkagṛha, 97.
Śatadru, 58-59, 71.
Śataghnī, 94.
Śatakumbha, 103.
Śatamāna, 104-105.
Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, 18-19, 44.
Śatarudrā, 57, 59; see Śatadru.
Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, 296.
Satya, 245, 275, 283-284, 294.
Satyagraha, 237, 238, 259, 263; see Saccakiriya.
Saundarananda Kāvya, 39, 50.
Śauṇḍika, 111.
Sautrāmaṇi, 293.
Sauvīra, 52-54, 71.
Sāvatthi, 64, see Śrāvasti.
Sāvitrī; see Gāyatrī.
Sāyaṇa, 8.
Śayyāgṛha, 97.
Sculpture, 114.
Sea-port, 90.
Sea-routes, 122.
Seats, 157-158, 164.
Sea-worship, 263.
Self-introduction, 162.
Setu, 120.
Setubandha, 7.
Sex, 186-187, 190, 194, 286.

Sexual gratification, 188-192; see Coitus.
Ships, 121-122.
Ship-wrecks, 122.
Sigālovāda Sutta, 276.
Sīgiriya, 186.
Śikya, 100.
Śikṣā, 309; see Vedāṅgas.
Śilāmakachagam, 59.
Silks, 151-152.
Śilpa, 311.
Śilpis, 112-113.
Sin; see Pāpa.
Sindhu, 52-54.
Sister, 136.
Sītā-eliya, 68.
Sītāvaka, 68.
Śiva, 256-258, 260-261, 265, 273.
Śivatīrtha, 260.
Śivikā, 120-121.
Skanda, 256.
Slaves, 102, 104, 106.
Śleṣmātakavana, 77-78.
Smṛtis, 1, 39, 144, 210, 216.
Śodhaka, 112.
Soma, 256-257, 265, 315.
Son, 135-137.
Śoṇa, 54-55.
Soothsayers, 232.
Sopāna, 98.
South India, 326; see Colonization and Aryanisation of South India.
Specialization in Crafts, 112.
Specialization in Industries, 110.
Sphaṭika, 105.
Spirits, 241.
Spoken Sanskrit, 21-22.
Śrāddha, 3, 148, 201, 215, 298.
Śramaṇa; 254-255; see Bhikṣu.
Śrāvasti, 51-52, 78-79, 117, 326.
Śreṇi, 118.
Śreṇimahattarāḥ,118.
Śrīmatī Mahānadī, 60, 62.
Śṛṅgavīrapura, 60-62, 81, 91, 119,122.
Śruti, 2, 181.
Stambha, 98.
Statuary, 114.
Statues, 265.
Stāvakas, 177,
Sthānavatī, 59.
Sthānumatī, 59
Story-telling, 172-173, 210, 321.
Strabo, 50.
Strījita, 208.
Strike, 112.
Sudāmāna, 58.
Sudāmā, 59.
Sudarśana, 70.
Śūdras, 116, 124-125, 129-132.
Suicide, 159-160, 194, 255, 295.
Śukra, 256, 258, 312.
Śūla, 110.
Śulka, 194, 196, 199.
Sumaṅgalavilāsinī, 11.
Sumatra, 117.
Sumeru, 77-78.
Sun-worship, 291.
Supernatural,237-242.
Superstitions, 224-234, 242.
Surasāvarta, 52.
Śūrasenā, 78.
Surāṣṭra, 54, 71.
Surgery, 314-315.
Sūrya, 181, 256, 257.
Sūta, 19, 175-177.
Sūtras, 47, 130, 202, 290, 308.
Sūtrabhāṣya, 308.
Sutta Nipāta, 64-65, 146, 230, 307.
Suttee, 203-204.
Suvarṇa, 103-105.
Suvarṇadvīpa, 117.
Suvela, 69.
Svadharma, 140, 277-278.
Svādhyāyana; see Vedic Study.
Svāgatam, 161, 162.
Svara, 181.
Svarga, 207, 220, 224, 258, 269-274, 280, 283, 289.
Svastika, 179, 239.
Svastikāras, 177.
Svastyayana, 164, 292.
Svayambhū, 252, 257.
Svayaṃvara, 195-196, 209.
Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, 225.
Swearing, 160.
Sweetmeats, 111, 146, 148.
Tailors, 113.
Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, 9, 16, 21.
Taittirīya Prātiśākhya, 21, 38.
Taittirīya School, 302.
Takṣaśilā, 78, 79, 117.
Tāla, 179, 181.
Tālāpacara, 178,
Tālapuṭa, 178.
Tālāvacara, 178.
Tamasā, 20, 60, 62, 77.
Tamasāmārga, 60, 119.
Tāna, 181.
Taṅka, 110.
Tantri, 180.
Tantric Literature, 261.
Tapas; see Asceticism.
Taptahāṭaka, 103.
Tarka, 249.
Teetotallers, 149-150.
Temples, 94; see Devāgāra, Devālaya, Devāyatana and Devatāgāra.
Theragāthā, 280.
Theriolatry, 262; see Cow-worship.
Thūpārāma Caitya, 266.
Tilaka, 155, 189-190.
Tīrtha, 264.
Tiruvāymoḷi, 32.
Toraṇas, 59, 92, 97.
Toṭagamuve Rāhula, 7.
Trade, 93, 104, 108-109, 115-118, 121-122.
Trade guilds, 118; see Śreṇis.
Trade routes, 116-117.

Trade Unions, 112.
Traders, 90.
Trā-kien, 40.
Trayīvārtā, 108.
Tree-worship, 262.
Trikūṭa, 69.
Triliṅgā, 57-59.
Trimūrti, 256-258.
Tripramāṇa, 181.
Triśṛṅga, 70.
Tristhāna, 181.
Tulasi Das, 7.
Tumbaru, 181.
Tusāras, 88-89.

Udīcya, 53.
Ujjeni, 64.
Umā, 261.
Underground routes, 120.
Upādhyāya, 126, 210.
Upānahat, 151.
Upaniṣads, 9, 24, 27, 39, 218, 243, 245-248, 271, 275-276, 290, 300, 305, 308, 317, 321.
Upavāsa, 289.
Uṣavadāta, 264.
Uśīrabīja, 77-78.
Uṣṇīṣa, 150.
Uṭaja, 100.
Uttara, 59.
Uttararāmacarita, 6, 33, 148, 201.
Uttārikā, 59.
Uttarīya, 150-152.

Vāda, 249.
Vāhana; see vehicles.
Vāhlīka, 58, 71.
Vaidiśa, 78-79.
Vaidūrya, 105.
Vaijayanta, 71.
Vaiśālī, 55.
Vaiṣṇavism, 2, 4, 34, 39, 223-224, 257-261.
Vaiśravaṇa, 257-258.
Vaiśyas, 108-109, 124-125, 129-132, 303, 306.
Vaitālika, 175, 177.
Vaitaraṇī, 272.
Vājapeya, 293.
Vājiśālā, 97.
Vajjis, 53, 55.
Vajra, 105.
Valkala, 100.
Vallakī, 180.
Vālmīki, 20-21, 23, 31, 40-41, 177,223,
Vāḷukinī, 69-70.
Vānaprastha, 99-101, 143-145, 163, 254, 285-286.
Vānaras, 82-85.
Vanasabhaya, 64.
Vanayu, 71.
Vandins, 19, 175, 177.
Vaṅga, 52.
Varāhamihira, 313.
Vāraṇaśālā, 97.
Vārāṇasī, 77-78.
Vāraṇasthala, 59.
Varṇa, 124-125, 139-140.
Varṇadharma, 143.
Varṇāśramadharma, 143, 276-278,
Varuṇa, 256-258, 265.
Vāruṇītirtha, 57-58.
Varūtha, 59, 70.
Varūthi, 69-70.
Vāsava, 256.
Vasiṣṭha Siddhānta, 313.
Vāstuśamanīyāni maṅgalāni, 292.
Vāsudeva, 257; see Viṣṇu.
Vasus, 257, 265.
Vaṭa-dā-ge, 266.
Vātsyāyana, 50, 190.
Vāyu, 256-257, 265.
Vedas, 1-2, 7, 44, 126-127, 144, 150, 183, 200, 202, 210, 224, 237, 239, 242-243, 271, 284, 290, 293-294, 298-308, 316, 327.
Vedāṅgas, 126-127, 271, 291, 301, 307-310.
Vedānta, 245-247, 250, 308.
Vedaśruti, 60, 62.
Vedic Caraṇas, 300, 302.
Vedic Gods, 256-258.
Vedic Language, 21.
Vedic Literature; see Vedas.
Vedic Ritual, 159.
Vedic Study, 125-126, 253, 271, 286. 302, 305-307.
Vedikā, 98.
Vedisā, 64.
Vegetarianism, 147-148.
Vehicles, 120.
Velāvana, 66, 69.
Veṇu, 178, 180.
Versification, 23-25.
Vessantara Jātaka, 10.
Vidarbha, 56, 77-78.
Videha, 63.
Vidhātā, 256-257, 265.
Vidruma, 105.
Vidyāsnāta, 304.
Village, 90-91, 93, 99, 105-106.
Vimalasūri, 40.
Vimāna, 95-96, 122-123.
Vīnā, 180.
Vinatā, 59.
Vinaya, 214, 279.
Vinda, 233.
Vindhya, 57, 65-67, 70, 72, 77-78.
Vipañci, 180.
Vipāśā, 53, 57-59, 71.
Vīramatsyas, 59.
Viśākha, 233, 312.
Viśālāyatana, 95.
Visitors, 160-164.
Viṣṇu, 161-162, 222-224, 246, 248-249, 256-261, 264-265, 303.
Viṣṇuloka, 270,
Viṣṇupada, 72.
Viṭaṅka, 98.
Vitardi, 98.
Vivasvat, 265.
Vows, 128, 149, 237-238.

Vṛṣabhadhvaja, 256; see Śiva.
Vyāmiśraka, 175.
Vyāsa, 20.

Wagon, 121.
Waist-girdle, 153-155.
Washerman, 111.
Water-sport, 171.
Watchers, 112.
Weavers, 113.
Wedding rites, 178, 201-202.
White-washing, 98.
Widowhood, 203,
Widow remarriage, 203-204.
Wife, 204-209.
Woman, 106-107, 149-157, 162, 184-186, 192-193, 202, 209-216, 255.
Working girls, 215.
Wrestling, 174.
Writing, 308-309.

Yājñavalkya, 44, 314.
Yajurveda, 20-21, 301.
Yakṣas, 68, 88, 91.
Yakṣatva, 272, 274.
Yama, 256-258, 265, 271.
Yāma, 59.
Yamunā, 59-62, 69, 71, 77.
Yamunāvana, 61.
Yāna; see vehicles.
Yānaśālā, 97.
Yantraśastra, 94.
Yati, 253.
Yavadvīpa, 76.
Yavanas, 53, 88-89.
Yodhadharma, 278.
Yoga, 247-249, 271, 286-287, 289.
Yuga, 221, 283.
Yukti, 249.
Yūpa, 265.

Zodiac, 234, 314.
Zoology, 315-316.